

CAPPY RICKS

By EDWARD E. ROSE

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY



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CAPPY RICKS

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY
EDWARD E. ROSE

ADAPTED FROM THE STORY BY

PETER B. KYNE

WITHDRAWN
NDSU

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THE CASTING SHEET

ELLEN MURRAY—

Straight Ingenue. About nineteen, dainty and pretty.

JOHN SKINNER—

Second Man. Man of about forty or older. Extremely correct and precise.

ALDEN P. RICKS—

Eccentric character-comedy. Man of sixty, eccentric and lovable. Neat of dress.

FLORENCE RICKS—

Female Lead. Girl of twenty. Should be petite and dainty.

EDWARD SINGLETON—

First Utility. Typical lawyer of perhaps thirty-five. Neat.

CECIL PERICLES BERNHARD—

Juvenile light-comedy. Early twenties. English type. Extreme in dress. "Silly-ass."

CAPTAIN MATT PEASLEY—

Male lead. Should be strapping, broad-shouldered fellow, rather quiet and intense. Ship officer's uniform first act. Business rest of play.

AUNT LUCY RICKS—

Character or second woman. Sweet lady of forty or forty-five.

BROOKFIELD—

Second Utility. Chauffeur. Uniform.

SINGLETON, first act	} Double.
BROOKFIELD, last act	

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I. CAPPY RICKS' Office, California Street,
San Francisco.
- ACT II. *Six weeks later.* "Sea-Look," CAPPY
RICKS' home overlooking the Pacific
Ocean, just outside San Francisco.
- ACT III. *One week later.* CAPPY RICKS' office,
same as Act I.

CAPPY RICKS

ACT I

SCENE: CAPPY RICKS' office, California Street, San Francisco.

Window C. in flat. Door R.U. to outer office and street. Door L.U. to bookkeeper's office. Door L.I. to SKINNER'S office. Armchair down R.C. CAPPY'S desk C., with office chairs R. and L. and swivel chair behind it. Filing cabinet L. against wall between doors L.I. and L.U. Small stand with water-pitcher and glass up R. above R.U.

AT RISE: *Stage empty. After rise, ELLEN MURRAY enters R.U. Crosses to CAPPY'S desk and places several letters upon it. As she does so, loud cheering and shouting is heard from street below and off back. ELLEN stops, listens a moment, and then goes up to window, pulls it open and looks down. As she does so, SKINNER enters door L.I. quickly and goes up L.*

SKINNER. What is it, Miss Murray?

ELLEN. I don't know, sir—there's a crowd of men down there. They are carrying an old man on their shoulders and seem to be cheering him.

(SKINNER hurries up to window and looks out.)

SKINNER. (*Looking down*) Why, it's Mr. Ricks!

(*Crowd off at back yells: "Speech, Cappy, speech!"*)

CAPPY. (*Off at back*) Boys, we've had some fine times together. We've worked and fought, and won and been thrashed. We've made money—lost and made it again. We've matched our wits against each other—not so much for the dollars as for the fun of the game. And now, as I look down on you from the peak of sixty years, I'm going to ask my first favor of you!

VOICES. (*Off at back*) What is it, Cappy? Fire away!

CAPPY. Go down to the dock—all of you—and jump in the bay!

(*Laughter from the crowd. One voice begins to sing, "For he's a jolly good fellow!" and all join in, swelling and then growing fainter in distance.*)

ELLEN. (*Closes window and comes down*) Is that really Mr. Ricks?

SKINNER. Yes, indeed. He's sixty years old to-day and the boys are evidently giving him a send-off.

ELLEN. They must be very fond of him.

SKINNER. Every man in the shipping business loves Cappy Ricks. He fights them to the last ditch, and when they're whipped—and he always wins—he's the first to put his hand and pull them to their feet again.

ELLEN. Then he must have a good heart?

SKINNER. The best in the world, but he doesn't want anybody to say so.

ELLEN. (*Laughs and sits on end of desk*) And

here I've been waiting for him in fear and trembling.

SKINNER. Why?

ELLEN. Well, the girl whose place I've taken told me dreadful things about him last night. Said he is positively ferocious—that he yelled at her all the time.

SKINNER. That was because she was incompetent. Mr. Ricks can forgive anything but incompetence. He made me discharge our bookkeeper Saturday night for the same reason.

ELLEN. (*Crosses to SKINNER*) Do you think I'll suit him, sir?

SKINNER. From what I've seen of your work so far this morning, I'm sure of it.

CAPPY. (*Off R.U., roars*) By the Holy pink-toed Prophet!

SKINNER. (*Hastily*) Sh! Here he comes!

(SKINNER and ELLEN move quickly. SKINNER pretends to be busy at CAPPY's desk and ELLEN starts for door to L.U. CAPPY enters door R.U. He is wiping forehead with handkerchief. ELLEN stops and looks at him curiously.)

CAPPY. (*As he enters*) Whew! (*Sees SKINNER*) Ah, good morning, Skinner—good morning!

SKINNER. Good morning, Mr. Ricks! (*Crosses and offers hand.*) Congratulations!

CAPPY. (*Shaking hands, cordially*) Thanks, Skinner, thanks! (*Mops brow.*) Whew! (*Feels himself.*) Am I all here?

SKINNER. The boys were excited, sir.

CAPPY. Excited? They've lost their senses, Skinner! I can't see why a man can't reach the age of sixty without a bunch of hoodlums dragging him out of his carriage and making a monkey out of him by carrying him off down the street on their shoul-

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ders. (*Sees ELLEN.*) Hello, who have we here?

SKINNER. This is your new secretary, Miss Murray, Mr. Ricks.

(*ELLEN comes down L.C.*)

CAPPY. (*Crosses to her with hand outstretched*) How d'ye do, Miss Murray? Welcome to our office.

ELLEN. (*Taking his hand diffidently*) Thank you, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. Had plenty of office experience?

ELLEN. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. Where?

ELLEN. In New York.

CAPPY. Well, that's a good place. Chew gum?

ELLEN. Sometimes, sir.

CAPPY. During business hours?

ELLEN. No, sir.

CAPPY. Smoke cigarettes?

ELLEN. No, sir.

CAPPY. Stay out all night dancing and come around to business half asleep?

ELLEN. No, sir.

CAPPY. Take a hundred and fifty words for five minutes running?

ELLEN. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. Know how to keep your mouth shut about business?

ELLEN. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. All right—you'll do. Come in five minutes and take some letters.

ELLEN. Yes, sir. (*Exits L.U.*)

CAPPY. (*To SKINNER*) Find a bookkeeper yet? (*Sits back of desk.*)

SKINNER. No, sir. Only two reported and they wouldn't do.

CAPPY. Have to find one pretty quick. That last loafer let the books get way behind.

SKINNER. I'll take care of the books till we get someone.

CAPPY. No, you won't! You've got enough to do. (*Looks over letters.*) Office boy show up this morning?

SKINNER. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. Where was he yesterday?

SKINNER. Says he went to a ball game.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What! The young villain!

SKINNER. I told him he was through Saturday night.

CAPPY. (*Clears throat*) Ahem! Harumph-h-h! How old is that office boy?

SKINNER. About fourteen, I think.

CAPPY. Harumph-h-h! When I was fourteen I got arrested for stealing apples. (*With decision.*) Better give him another chance, Skinner.

SKINNER. (*Protesting*) But, sir——

CAPPY. (*Lifts hand*) Not a peep out of you, sir—not a peep! (*Ferociously*) But you tell him if it happens again, he loses his job. (*Looking over letters.*) Any word from that hoodo ship of ours, the *Retriever*?

SKINNER. Not a thing. You know the *Retriever* can't possibly make port inside of a week or ten days.

CAPPY. Of course I know it, you durn fool! I didn't say anything about her making port. But some steamer might have picked her up and reported.

SKINNER. I haven't heard a thing, sir.

CAPPY. (*Opens another letter*) By the pink-toed Prophet! I bet I equip that barkentine with wireless the minute she hits port! (*Looking at letter.*) What? What's this? (*Looks up, excitedly*) Skinner!

SKINNER. (*Alert*) Yes, sir?

CAPPY. You've heard me speak of Nicholas Bernard of New York?

SKINNER. Yes, sir. An old boyhood friend, I believe.

CAPPY. That's the chap. He and I used to go to school together down in our little home town, Thomaston, Maine.

SKINNER. I've heard you speak of him, sir.

CAPPY. Well, Nick's got a million dollars, and a son who will fall heir to the million some day. Nick's all fussed up because the boy's contracted a bad case of chorus-girlitis.

SKINNER. A case of what, sir?

CAPPY. Chorus-girlitis! Fallen in love with some little baggage in the front row of a chorus.

SKINNER. I understand.

CAPPY. So Nick's been after me to take the young rascal in hand and teach him the shipping business. I told him to send him along, and this letter says he's on his way.

SKINNER. I guess you can teach him the shipping business all right, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. I teach him? He's your meat, Skinner. It's up to you to lay out a course for young Bernard, and when you're through with him I'll add the finishing touches. Besides, between us we ought to be able to make the young fellow quite miserable.

(FLORRY RICKS *enters door R.U. softly, signals SKINNER to silence, steals to behind CAPPY and places hand over his eyes. She carries bouquet of American Beauties.*)

CAPPY. (*Clears throat, grins*) Harumph-h-h! I'll bet that's our new secretary, Skinner—she's a peach!

FLORRY. (*Shocked*) Daddy! (*Jerks away hand.*)

(CAPPY *winks and grins at SKINNER.*)

CAPPY. (*Looks up in pretended surprise*) Oh, excuse me, Florry!

FLORRY. (*Indignantly*) You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

CAPPY. I am! What right has an old man like I am to be interested in peaches?

FLORRY. Who said you were old?

CAPPY. Well, I'm sixty to-day.

FLORRY. In years, but not in spirit.

CAPPY. (*Winks at SKINNER*) Get that, Skinner?

FLORRY. Did you think I had forgotten you? (*Holds out roses.*) These are for you, Daddy!

CAPPY. (*Delighted*) For me? (*Takes flowers, buries face in them.*) Roses! (*Softly, looking at roses.*) When I see one rose, I always think of you, Florry. But when I see a bunch of them—I always think of your mother. (*A pause. CAPPY tries to control himself. SKINNER moves up to window. FLORRY looks away—recovers, brightly*) There's water in that pitcher, Florry. Put the roses in it and set it where I can see 'em all day.

(FLORRY *gets pitcher from stand up R., brings it down and places it on front of desk with roses in it.*)

FLORRY. (*Goes up to him*) I owe you sixty kisses, Daddy—one for each year.

CAPPY. (*Holds up face, grins*) I'll collect 'em on the installment plan—one at a time! (FLORRY *laughs and kisses him.*)

FLORRY. (*With arms about his neck*) And now—Popsy!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Skinner! (SKINNER *comes down quickly.*) The enemy is about to attack! Fortify the bank account! (*Looks up at her.*) Well—how much?

FLORRY. An awful lot this time, Daddy!

CAPPY. Well, well—get the painful operation over! Out with it!

FLORRY. (*Blurts out*) Fifty thousand dollars!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) How much?

FLORRY. Fifty thousand dollars!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Help, Skinner, help!

FLORRY. I've just got to have it, Popsy!

CAPPY. Going to buy a half interest in the Southern Pacific Railroad?

FLORRY. It's for a charity.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) A charity? Fifty thousand dollars for a charity! Going to build a home for indigent millionaires?

FLORRY. Oh, it's for something very important!

CAPPY. What is it?

FLORRY. It's for the African Pygmies Uplift Society!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What in thunder is an African Pygmy?

FLORRY. They are a race of dwarfs that live in the wilds of Central Africa. They're savages, but they are really very intelligent. So we are sending teachers and ministers among them to uplift them.

CAPPY. Yes, and they'll uplift the teachers and ministers—on their spears—then serve 'em hot for supper.

FLORRY. All the best ladies in town are in it, Daddy.

CAPPY. Yes, darn fool women—money and no brains—nothing to think about! (*Leans over and sorts letters.*)

FLORRY. (*Places arms about his neck, coaxingly*) Now, Popsy——

CAPPY. Don't bother me, I'm busy! Run along!

FLORRY. But I promised the Society——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Sav, do you think thousand dollar bills grow on bushes?

FLORRY. (*Pouts. Turns away.*) Oh—all right—

CAPPY. (*Thinking fast*) Tell you what I'll do—
(*FLORRY turns back.*) I'll have Skinner write you a check for five thousand dollars now if you'll call it square.

FLORRY. (*Reflects*) No, I might get along with twenty thousand—I pledged myself to raise at least that much.

CAPPY. (*Goes back to letters*) Nothing doing!

FLORRY. (*Turns toward door R.U.*) Oh, very well. Good-bye, Father!

CAPPY. "Father!" (*Yells.*) Skinner!

SKINNER. (*Jumps*) Yes, sir!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What in thunder are you standing there for? Why don't you go and make out that check? (*FLORRY stops at door.*)

SKINNER. (*Gasps*) For twenty thousand dollars?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Of course for twenty thousand! (*Leans over, rapidly sotto voce*) Getting off cheap, you durn fool! (*Yells*) That's what she asked for, isn't it?

SKINNER. (*Hastily*) Yes, sir! (*Crosses to L.I.*)

CAPPY. (*As SKINNER gets to door*) And Skinner—

SKINNER. (*Stops at door*) Yes, sir?

CAPPY. Get busy on that bookkeeper. We've got to get those books in order!

SKINNER. I'll do my best, sir. (*Exits L.I., closing door.*)

FLORRY. (*Runs down and embraces CAPPY*) Oh, you're the dearest daddy in the world!

CAPPY. And you're the dearest daughter in the world—cost me twenty thousand dollars at a clatter! (*Waves her off.*) Now get that check and run along. We've got a busy day ahead of us and no bookkeeper.

FLORRY. What's the matter with the bookkeeper?

CAPPY. (*Sorting letters*) Fired him Saturday night—no good. Books way behind!

FLORRY. Can't you get another?

CAPPY. Good accountants are like hens' teeth—ain't no sech animal! (*Looking over letters.*)

FLORRY. (*Suddenly*) Oh, Daddy, I've got an idea!

CAPPY. Send it to a museum! (*Looking at letter.*)

FLORRY. Let me take care of your books till you find someone!

CAPPY. (*Looks up—yells*) What!

FLORRY. You know how clever I am with figures—and I passed in bookkeeping at college. I'm just sure I could straighten everything out for you.

CAPPY. Say, what are you raving about?

FLORRY. Please let me, Daddy. I'd just love to do something worth while, to feel that I have a place in the world. I just feel so useless.

CAPPY. You'll have enough to do when I'm through. This business will keep you pretty busy—you and Skinner.

FLORRY. Don't talk that way, Daddy!

CAPPY. Oh, don't worry. I'm not thinking about dying yet—not for a good many years.

FLORRY. But I'd like to do something now. Please let me go over your books for you. I want to do something real—I want to accomplish—I want to be something besides just an idler. I guess I've got some of you in me, Daddy.

CAPPY. (*Looks at her proudly*) Shouldn't wonder if you have!

FLORRY. Then please let me.

CAPPY. Bah! Get that nonsense out of your head! (*Takes up letter.*) I've got a surprise for you!

FLORRY. Oh, what is it?

CAPPY. You remember young Bernard—Nick Bernard's son?

FLORRY. You mean the people who visited us from New York, years ago?

CAPPY. The same. Well, Nick's sending the boy out to me to learn the shipping business.

FLORRY. You don't mean it? His name was Cecil, wasn't it?

CAPPY. Yes, that's it—asinine name for a boy!

FLORRY. We were just children when we saw each other last.

CAPPY. Well, he's grown up now—physically, if not mentally. You know Nick always had it in his head that his youngster and you should marry. What do you think about it?

FLORRY. Why, what a question! I hardly remember him! What do you think?

CAPPY. Well, Nick and I have been life-long friends—fought each other and played hooky together down in Thomaston, Maine, and I think a lot of him. If his cub is worth anything at all, nothing could suit me better. You'll have to have a real man to help you run this business some day.

(ELLEN MURRAY *appears in L.U.*)

ELLEN. Are you ready for me, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. Yes, come right in, Miss Murray! (ELLEN *enters and comes to desk*. CAPPY *indicates* FLORRY.) This is my daughter, Florry, Miss Murray.

ELLEN. (*Meets FLORRY c.*) Pleased to meet you, Miss Ricks.

FLORRY. And I, you, Miss Murray. You mustn't mind father—he is——

CAPPY. (*Clears throat loudly*) Harumph-h-h! Now, that'll do—that'll do! (*Indicates chair L. of desk.*) Sit down, Miss Murray!

(ELLEN sits L. of desk and opens book.)

FLORRY. I'll go in and get that check from Mr. Skinner. (*Crosses across to L.I.*)

CAPPY. Oh, he'll bring it out in a minute. (*Arranges letters.*)

FLORRY. (*At L.I.*) But I want to have a talk with him.

CAPPY. (*Sorting letters*) All right, go ahead. (*FLORRY exits door L.I, closing door. CAPPY looks at ELLEN's book.*) Never mind your book—just write on the letters. Ready?

ELLEN. (*Closes book*) Yes, sir.

CAPPY. (*Shoots replies like lightning. Gives her letter*) No! (*ELLEN takes letter and writes on it. Gives her another letter.*) I guess so. (*ELLEN writes on letter. Same bus.*) I don't care what you tell him—only make it strong! (*Same bus. for ELLEN—same bus.*) Tell him to invite himself out to dinner—my expense. (*Same bus.*) Advise him to go to Halifax—damn him! (*Same bus.*) In the sweet bye and by. (*Same bus.*) You're getting your feet wet. (*Same bus.*) Hold the fort till Wednesday. (*Same bus.*) Go to hell! (*Same bus. Waves hand.*) That's all. Scoot!

(*ELLEN rises and starts for L.U. CAPPY turns suddenly in his chair and looks off R.U.—stops ELLEN as she reaches door.*)

CAPPY. Miss Murray? (*ELLEN stops and turns at L.U.. Indicates R.*) The boy isn't out there, is he?

ELLEN. Mr. Skinner sent him on an errand, sir.

CAPPY. (*Indicates R.U.*) Somebody just came in—see who it is.

ELLEN. (*Goes across to R.U.*) Yes, sir. (*Exits*

R.U.—*returns immediately.*) A gentleman to see you, sir.

CAPPY. Who is he?

ELLEN. A Mr. Singleton, sir.

CAPPY. Never heard of him. What does he want?

ELLEN. He says he's a lawyer, sir.

CAPPY. A lawyer? Oh! (*Rises, goes down and closes door of safe—as he returns to chair*) All right—send him in! (*Sits.*)

ELLEN. (*Speaks off R.U.*) Right this way, sir!

(SINGLETON *enters. He is a dapper, business-like fellow of about thirty-five. He stops up R.C.*)

SINGLETON. Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. (*Looking him over*) That's who it is! (ELLEN *goes to door L.U. and exits, closing door.*) What can I do for you?

SINGLETON. I'm here as Mr. Gordon's representative.

CAPPY. Why didn't Gordon come himself?

SINGLETON. He's laid up—sprained his ankle.

CAPPY. Oh! Are you a marine lawyer, too?

SINGLETON. No, but I'm associated with Mr. Gordon in all his other business.

CAPPY. But I want a marine lawyer—that's why I sent for Gordon.

SINGLETON. I am to make a record of whatever you wanted to see him about and submit it to him.

CAPPY. Oh, I see. You lawyers never let anything slip through your fingers, do you? (*Indicates chair R. of desk.*) Sit down.

SINGLETON. (*Sits*) Thank you. (*Takes out book and pencil.*) Now, if you'll—

CAPPY. (*Jumps up excitedly*) It's about my Retriever!

SINGLETON. (*Looks up, surprised*) Your what, sir?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) My *Retriever*! My *Retriever*!

SINGLETON. (*Blankly*) Has it been stolen?

CAPPY. (*Amazed*) Has what been stolen?

SINGLETON. Your dog.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Dog! Dog! Who said anything about a dog?

SINGLETON. You said your retriever——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) That's the name of a boat, you infernal idiot!

SINGLETON. Oh, I beg your pardon—a boat!

CAPPY. (*Excitedly*) Yes, a boat—a ship—a barkentine! Know what a barkentine is?

SINGLETON. Yes, sir; it's a boat—a ship.

CAPPY. Square-rigged forward—schooner-rigged aft. That clear?

SINGLETON. (*Hastily*) Oh, yes, yes—quite clear!

CAPPY. And it's hollow inside!

SINGLETON. Hollow inside!

CAPPY. Now that you know what I'm talking about, we'll go ahead. The *Retriever's* one of the finest sailing ships in my fleet, but for the last three months she has had this office turned inside out.

SINGLETON. (*Blankly*) Well, that's too bad!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What!

SINGLETON. (*Hastily*) I mean—if you would explain——

CAPPY. Now, I'm going to tell this thing in my own way—and it's your business to listen! (*Paces up and down L. of desk, excitedly.*) I sent that ship out of here seven months ago with a cargo for Cape Town. She had no sooner arrived there than a native stuck a knife into the Captain—killed him deader'n a mackerel!

SINGLETON. Good gracious!

CAPPY. Then I began to get cablegrams from the first mate—some whippersnapper by the name of

Matt Peasley whom I had never heard of. It seems he shipped out of here before the mast and the Captain had made him mate during the voyage.

SINGLETON. He must have been entitled to——

CAPPY. (*Breaks in*) Oh, his papers are all right—we looked him up here. But that wasn't the question. The *Retriever's* a valuable boat, and she was to bring back a hundred-thousand-dollar cargo. We couldn't trust all that to a man we knew nothing about, so we wired him that we were sending on another captain. (*Faces SINGLETON.*) And do you know what that scalawag did?

SINGLETON. What?

CAPPY. Wired us that he was determined to bring the ship back himself, and that if we sent on another captain, he'd chuck him overboard!

SINGLETON. Well, well!

CAPPY. So we cabled Mr. Peasley he was fired!

SINGLETON. Of course that settled it.

CAPPY. No, it didn't—not by a long shot! That infernal sea-lawyer knew his rights, and answered that we could fire the captain, but only the captain could fire a mate. The captain was dead, so he had us by the neck.

SINGLETON. What did you do?

CAPPY. (*Shakes fist at SINGLETON*) Do! No man has ever covered Alden P. Ricks with blood and got away with it! I'll tell you what I did! I hunted up the biggest, toughest captain I could find—a big, burly Swede, weighing over two hundred and fifty pounds—a two-fisted human bull that has licked everything on the seven seas, and I shipped him off to Cape Town with orders to beat Mr. Peasley to a pulp, and bring what was left of him back in the *Retriever*.

SINGLETON. Did he carry out your orders?

CAPPY. You just bet he did!

SINGLETON. Oh, then you've heard from him?

CAPPY. Not a word. But I got a cable from the American consul at Cape Town that the *Retriever* set sail within an hour after the Swede Captain took charge. (*Pacing up and down.*) Now, here's what I wanted to see you about. That ship will be in here within a week or ten days, and the minute she comes to anchor they will bring the pieces of Mr. Matt Peasley ashore. Then what's left of him will begin to yell for the police. So I want to know just where I get off at.

SINGLETON. The assault took place in a foreign port?

CAPPY. But on an American ship, flying the American flag. Don't forget that!

SINGLETON. (*Doubtfully*) Well, of course, not being versed in marine law——

CAPPY. I don't expect an answer from you. See Gordon to-night and have him send me the data in the morning.

(SKINNER *opens door* L.I.—*and stops. Sees SINGLETON and stops.*)

CAPPY. (*Turning to SKINNER*) What is it, Skinner?

SKINNER. Nothing immediate, sir. (*Starts to exit.*)

CAPPY. Hold on! This gentleman is through here.

(SKINNER *enters, closing door.*)

CAPPY. (*Turning to SINGLETON*) Don't delay about this matter.

SINGLETON. I'll see Mr. Gordon at once. (*Goes up to R.U.—at door.*) Good day, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. Good day. (SINGLETON *exits* R.U. CAPPY *goes and sits behind desk.*) What is it, Skinner?

SKINNER. Miss Florence.

CAPPY. What about her?

SKINNER. She came in my office and insisted on taking charge of the books!

CAPPY. (*Rises, yells*) What!

SKINNER. She's going over them now. I didn't want her to, but she insisted.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) How dare you let anybody have access to my books without my permission?

SKINNER. But—but——

CAPPY. Not a peep out of you, sir—not a peep! You have charge of this office, haven't you? What do I pay you ten thousand dollars a year for?

SKINNER. But she's just like you—when she makes up her mind there's no stopping her. (*Starts for door L.I.*) However, I'll——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Skinner! (*SKINNER stops at door. CAPPY clears throat.*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! Is she enjoying it, Skinner?

SKINNER. She seems delighted. She's writing away, humming to herself.

CAPPY. (*Clears throat*) Harumph-h-h!—can't do any harm, can she?

SKINNER. None at all—and a great deal of good, perhaps. Took right hold of the work like a veteran.

CAPPY. (*Goes to SKINNER*) Say, Skinner, she is a little bit like me, isn't she?

SKINNER. A daughter couldn't be any more like her father.

CAPPY. (*Slaps him on shoulder, delightedly*) I don't know what I'd do without you, Skinner! Best general manager in the shipping business!

SKINNER. Thank you, Mr. Ricks. But what about Miss Florence?

CAPPY. (*Yells at him*) Let her alone!

(*CECIL sticks head in door R.U.*)

CAPPY. Don't you dare interfere with my daughter!

CECIL. What, ho!

CAPPY. (*Jumps, turns*) What who?

CECIL. What ho, messmates! (*Ventures in door.*)

CAPPY. By the holy pink-toed Prophet! (*Turns to SKINNER.*) Name it, Skinner, and you can have it!

CECIL. Choppy sea to the starboard!

CAPPY. (*Advances c.*) Is your keeper with you, young man?

CECIL. I take it you are Alden P. Ricks?

CAPPY. You take it right!

CECIL. Then we can get this beastly business over with right away.

CAPPY. To what business do you refer?

CECIL. What the Governor wrote you about.

CAPPY. (*Staggered, turns to SKINNER*) Skinner, a terrible premonition of evil is coming over me! (*Turns to CECIL.*) What's your name, young man?

CECIL. Cecil.

CAPPY. Bernard?

CECIL. Right-o. Cecil Pericles Bernard.

CAPPY. (*Throws up his hands*) Help! Murder! (*Turns to SKINNER.*) Don't faint, Skinner!

CECIL. I say, you were expecting me, weren't you?

CAPPY. (*Solemnly*) Yes, we were expecting you. But you exceed our expectations!

CECIL. I say, that's very decent of you. (*Stretches—yawns.*)

CAPPY. (*Indicates chair R.C.*) Lie down over there, Fido!

CECIL. (*Stares at him*) Eh—what?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Sit down! Sit down! You seem tired!

CECIL. Oh, thank you—thank you! I'm always tired. (*Crosses down and flops in armchair.*)

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) Skinner, I've found a place for that young man already!

(*FLORENCE opens door and enters L.I. She has her hat off and has her hand full of loose-leaf ledger sheets.*)

CAPPY. (*To FLORENCE*) Up to your eyes in it, eh, Florry?

FLORRY. Yes, indeed, Daddy. I think business is great fun!

CAPPY. If you ever get forty years of it, like I've had, you won't think so.

FLORRY. (*Shakes finger at him*) You know, Daddy, if it were not for the fun in business, you wouldn't be in it!

CECIL. (*Rises, advances R.C.*) I say—you're not really Miss Ricks?

FLORRY. (*To CAPPY*) Why, who is this?

CAPPY. (*Grins*) That's Cecil!

FLORRY. (*Advances with hand outstretched*) Why, how do you do, Mr. Bernard!

CECIL. (*Shakes her hand gingerly*) By Jove, you've changed, you have!

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) I guess we've both changed.

CAPPY. Skinner and I are going to make things interesting for Cecil, Florry!

FLORRY. Indeed!

CECIL. That's decent of you, you know.

CAPPY. You won't know him in a week—but you'll know he's around—long before you see him! (*Opens door L.I.*) Come on, Skinner—we'll arrange Cecil's future. (*Exits, followed by SKINNER.*)

CECIL. (*Blankly*) Now what did he mean by that?

FLORRY. I haven't the least idea. But I'm sorry for you.

CECIL. Why?

FLORRY. If they decide to teach you the shipping business they'll keep you busy. What one won't think of the other will.

CECIL. Well, I'll have to stay now I'm here. The Governor only gave me enough money to get here. He hasn't been a bit clubby lately.

FLORRY. What have you been doing?

CECIL. (*Takes glove from pocket, holds it up—sighs*) Falling in love! (*Kisses glove.*)

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) A girl?

CECIL. (*Sighs*) Yes, a girl! (*Fervently*) I love her, Miss Florence—devotedly, passionately—madly!

FLORRY. Where is she?

CECIL. I think she's somewhere out here. She was when I heard from her last, over a month ago. (*Eagerly*) Perhaps you've seen her?

FLORRY. How would I see her?

CECIL. You may have seen the show she was with.

FLORRY. A show!

CECIL. Yes, musical comedy, chorus—front row. (*Sighs.*) Her name is Goldie Glake!

FLORRY. Goldie Glake!

CECIL. Yes. (*Rapturously*) Sweet name, isn't it—Goldie Glake? Father was real unpleasant about her—said he intended I should marry you.

FLORRY. Don't let that worry you, Mr. Bernard.

CECIL. It makes me feel important, and I'm not used to feeling important. (*Earnestly*) Really, you know, I don't want to marry you!

FLORRY. And I don't want you to, I can tell you that!

CECIL. (*Stares at her*) No—really?

FLORRY. Yes—really!

CECIL. You—you honestly don't want to marry me?

FLORRY. I should say I do not!

CECIL. By jove, that's a relief, you know. If you had wanted to marry me the Governor would have insisted, and I would have lost Goldie.

FLORRY. Well, Goldie is perfectly safe as far as I'm concerned!

CECIL. I'm so glad! (*Eagerly*) Then perhaps you'll help me. You will help me, won't you?

FLORRY. How help you?

CECIL. Well, if father thinks that you and I care for each other he will keep me here, and that will give me a chance to find Goldie—and perhaps marry her. Understand?

FLORRY. But are you sure you want to marry that kind of a girl?

CECIL. (*Indignantly*) But she isn't "that kind of a girl," as you call her. She's a real woman all the way through. She was employed in a business office until she found she could earn more in the chorus. She supports her mother and little sister, you know.

FLORRY. (*Looks at him, surprised*) Cecil, I'm beginning to think you have something in you, after all!

CECIL. Thanks awfully! Will you help me?

FLORRY. Perhaps I will. What's your plan?

CECIL. Just pretend you care for me a little when your father's around. Then he'll write the Governor, and that will throw the old codger off the track, you know.

FLORRY. You mean—let you make love to *me*?

CECIL. (*Delightedly*) That's it!

FLORRY. But you mustn't be too genuine about it!

CECIL. Oh, no, no! Just let me call you "dear" and put my arm about you like this— (*Places arm about her waist*)—once in a while. (*CAPPY enters L.—stops flabbergasted on seeing situation. CE-*

CIL *whispers*) Here he is! (*Rapturously*) Isn't it wonderful, dear!

FLORRY. (*Sighs*) Heavenly!

CAPPY. (*Clears throat*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h-h! (*They separate in pretended confusion. CAPPY speaks off L. to SKINNER*) He's a fast worker, Skinner! (*Closes door and crosses C., glaring at CECIL. Intensely*) Well, I'm here!

CECIL. (*Backing away*) Yes, yes, I see you!

CAPPY. Florry, make yourself scarce. (*Facing CECIL.*) I want to have a little chat with this marmoset!

FLORRY. (*Pleadingly*) Be gentle with him, Father!

CAPPY. (*Slowly, eyeing CECIL*) Oh—yes—yes! You'll find him all here when you get back.

FLORRY. (*Tearfully*) Farewell, Cecil!

CECIL. (*Extravagantly*) Good-bye, dear heart!

(*FLORRY scurries out to cover up laughter.*)

CECIL. (*Looking after her*) By Jove, she's a brick!

CAPPY. Yes, but she isn't going to be thrown at you—you puppy, you toad, you gnat! (*Yells*) You don't seem to know who I am!

CECIL. (*Hastily*) Oh, yes, yes—I'm quite sure I do!

CAPPY. I'm Alden P. Ricks from Thomaston, Maine, and I've never been thrashed—understand?

CECIL. Yes, yes—never been thrashed!

CAPPY. But I'd consider myself licked for life if my daughter tied up to a zero like you. You've got to get some pep, some honest-to-God Americanism kicked into you, and some of your pink-tea Englishism kicked out, before you can wear out my door-mat, savvy?

CECIL. Yes, I savvy!

CAPPY. Now, I've got a dirty little old washtub with an engine in it down at the dock. She runs between here and the Faralone Islands, carrying fertilizer, and her captain is a guaranteed fool-killer. You're going down there in the morning and take a job as deck-hand on that boat, or I'll express you back to your father double-quick. What d'ye say?

CECIL. Oh, I'll go—of course I'll go!

CAPPY. Well, you'll wish you hadn't! However, if you stick to it, and make good, I'll consider you. I think a lot of your father, but I won't have any half-baked sissy hanging around my property. The man who marries my daughter will have to be a man! Paste that in your hat!

CECIL. It's pasted! I'll—

CAPPY. Shut up! And don't you try to put anything over on me, because you can't do it! A chap by the name of Matt Peasley tried it not long ago, and they're bringing him home from Cape Town in sections. I'm going to have you around when he arrives, so you'll understand what an earthquake I am! Now we understand each other perfectly, don't we?

CECIL. I understand *you*—quite perfectly!

CAPPY. All right! (*Crosses to door L.I.*) Think it over!

CECIL. (*Timidly*) I—I beg your pardon, sir—

(MATT PEASLEY *enters door R.U. and stands at door, looking in.*)

CAPPY. (*Stops at door*) Well?

CECIL. May I ask the name of this—er—fertilizer boat?

CAPPY. *Sweet Clover*. And that's the only sweet thing about her.

CECIL. How shall I find her?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Follow the smell! (*Exits L.I—closing door.*)

MATT. (*Comes down.*) I beg your pardon!

CECIL. (*Jumps—turns.*) Oh—you startled me!

MATT. Was that nice, kindly old gentleman Alden P. Ricks?

CECIL. Yes, indeed! Rummy old party—called me a sissy, a zero!

MATT. Why didn't you shake him up?

CECIL. Oh, that wouldn't do, you know. He's a kind of Czar—a little tin God out here. They say he's a decent sort at times.

MATT. Would you mind telling him that Captain Matt Peasley wants to see him?

CECIL. (*Staring at him*) Who did you say?

MATT. Captain Peasley of the *Retriever*!

CECIL. I thought you were to arrive in sections?

MATT. (*Laughs*) I'm happy to say I'm all here.

CECIL. (*Rushes up to R.U.*) Excuse me!

MATT. (*Astonished*) What's the matter?

CECIL. I'm going for a brandy and soda—I don't care for earthquakes! (*Dashes out R.U.*)

(*MATT looks after him in astonishment a moment.*)

FLORRY opens L.U. and enters, stops up L. on seeing MATT. MATT turns to go to door L.I—sees FLORRY, stops and removes cap.)

MATT. (*Shows embarrassment*) I—I beg your pardon! I would like to see Mr. Ricks.

FLORRY. (*Comes down, staring at him*) Who shall I say?

MATT. Captain Peasley of the *Retriever*.

FLORRY. (*Astounded*) The *Retriever*? The *Retriever* isn't in!

MATT. Anchored off Meiggs Wharf not twenty minutes ago.

FLORRY. (*Almost afraid to ask*) Who—who is in command?

MATT. I am at present.

FLORRY. But—but Captain Peterson——

MATT. You mean that big Swede old Ricks sent out to Cape Town to take charge?

FLORRY. (*Breathlessly*) Yes.

MATT. I brought him ashore and sent him up to the Marine Hospital.

FLORRY. (*Staggered*) What! You—you don't mean to say that you—you——

MATT. (*Smiles*) That I what?

FLORRY. That you got the best of him—that you thrashed him?

MATT. If I hadn't he would have thrashed me!

(FLORRY gasps, then bursts into almost hysterical laughter.)

MATT. (*Puzzled*) I'm afraid I don't understand?

FLORRY. (*Controls herself with difficulty*) Oh, excuse me, but I can't help it! It's too funny! (*Goes to him.*) Do you know that fight has been the talk of this office for the past three months? Everybody took it for granted that Captain Peterson would win.

MATT. Been on Mr. Ricks' mind, eh?

FLORRY. Night and day. He's talked of it, boasted of it, gloated over it, here, at home, on the street—everywhere! You see, you are the only man in his employ who has ever defied him!

MATT. I only acted within my rights.

FLORRY. And you really whipped the champion?

MATT. I'm afraid I did!

FLORRY. Did you thrash him good?

MATT. Well, it happened three months ago and he's badly stove up yet.

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) Oh, you've just got to tell me all about it!

MATT. I'm afraid it would take too long, Miss. If Mr. Ricks came in and found me talking to his—his—what is your position here?

FLORRY. Well, I'm keeping the books just now.

MATT. To his bookkeeper, he'd have just cause for complaint. And I don't want him to have anything on me.

FLORRY. Well, you see, I'm rather a privileged employee.

MATT. Oh, you've been with him a long time.

FLORRY. Ever since I was a little girl.

MATT. How on earth have you stood the old duffer so long?

FLORRY. (*Restraining a laugh*) Well, he's been like a father to me. He's not at all bad when you know him. In fact, he's been very good to me.

MATT. I'm glad to hear that. I was going to throw him through the window—now I won't.

FLORRY. He's an old man, you know.

MATT. He's an old scoundrel! Sent me some of the nastiest cablegrams to Cape Town, then sent on that terrible Swede to smash me up. It isn't Ricks' fault that I'm not a wreck this minute.

FLORRY. Were you frightened when you saw Captain Peterson coming for you?

MATT. Frightened? When I saw that human mountain coming down the deck, I just closed my eyes and said a prayer. But he started in wrong.

FLORRY. How?

MATT. He kicked me on the shin. It wasn't a square kick or he would have broken my leg. But it made me wild and I just dug into that Swede and hammered him into a pulp!

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) Oh, I'm so glad you won! But it will be a dreadful blow to Mr. Ricks. He

just can't bear to be beaten. I'm afraid it will cost you your position with the Blue Star.

MATT. No use crying over what's done.

FLORRY. Whatever made you do it?

MATT. (*Looks at her*) What, thrash Peterson?

FLORRY. No—defy the office. What made you so determined to sail the *Retriever* home?

MATT. Well, stubbornness, for one thing. I took it for granted I was to bring her back until I began to get those cables from Ricks. At that time I would have turned her over to another captain if Ricks hadn't been so nasty. Those telegrams got just my fighting blood up and I determined to go through.

FLORRY. (*Looking at him admiringly*) I can—understand that!

MATT. And then I had learned to love that ship—during the voyage I had dreamed night and day of some day being master of just such a craft. And when the opportunity came I just couldn't give it up.

FLORRY. You are very young to be a ship's master.

MATT. I was fourteen when I went to sea. I was a first officer at eighteen, and got my master's ticket the day after I was twenty-one. I drifted out here and, not being known, I couldn't find a berth. I hung around until I went broke, then sneaked off one night and signed on the *Retriever* as a common seaman.

FLORRY. And the Captain made you first mate?

MATT. After he had lost both his mates and I had showed him my papers. Then, when he was killed, I just couldn't give up the chance. It would have broken my heart.

FLORRY. But Mr. Ricks is very powerful out here. He can keep you from getting another command.

MATT. I expect him to do that.

FLORRY. What are you going to do?

MATT. I'm going to give up the sea—I am going to go into the shipping business for myself.

FLORRY. What! (*Laughs.*)

MATT. Oh, don't laugh! I'm more of a business man than you think. I've turned over several successful shipping deals for other people on the Eastern Coast. And if I could do it for them, I can do it for myself.

FLORRY. But it will take capital.

MATT. Well, I've got a tongue and there's plenty of capital lying idle in this city. I've found out that when you can show people a sure bet, it isn't hard to find the money.

FLORRY. Oh, you have something sure?

MATT. Dead sure.

FLORRY. What is it?

MATT. (*Wisely*) Oh, no—you're working for Ricks.

FLORRY. (*Laughs. Excitedly*) I won't betray you. (*Close to him.*) Honest I won't—cross my heart! (*Closer.*) Won't you trust me?

MATT. (*Looks at her. Impulsively*) I'd trust you, even if I lost the deal. I'd trust you with my life. I'd trust you with——

FLORRY. (*Stops him*) Now, now! You're too rapid, young man. Besides, we're talking business!

MATT. Oh, yes—that's so—business. Well, before I shipped out of here on the *Retriever*, I saw a big steamer anchored up the bay. She's been there for years, tied up by litigation, but she's in good condition and can be bought for two hundred thousand dollars.

FLORRY. (*Disappointed*) Oh, that's an awful lot of money!

MATT. It isn't so much when you consider I know where I can sell that vessel to-morrow for three hundred thousand.

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) Where?

MATT. To a firm in Cape Town. They're on the market for everything that has a keel on it, just at present.

FLORRY. But would it take two hundred thousand dollars all at once?

MATT. Not a bit of it—I can swing the deal for twenty thousand cash.

FLORRY. (*L.C., looks at door L.—excitedly*) You can?

MATT. Without a whimper. And once the twenty thousand is paid I could have her dolled up on credit, get the Cape Town representative to look her over, and use the purchase money to settle the balance. I ought to clear at least eighty thousand dollars on the deal.

FLORRY. But are you sure they'll buy?

MATT. Absolutely. I've already secured their option on it.

FLORRY. (*Gasps*) You accepted an option on a piece of property you didn't own?

MATT. Of course. It's business, if you can do it. That option will get me the money to buy the ship.

FLORRY. Captain Peasley, you are going to succeed as a business man. I'll get you twenty thousand dollars!

MATT. You!

FLORRY. Yes, if you'll consider me as a partner!

MATT. But how could a working girl like you—

FLORRY. (*Realizes her mistake*) Well—well, you see, I have a brother who has plenty of money. He will let me have some to invest in a sure thing like this.

MATT. Then your brother will be my partner?

FLORRY. No, I'll be your partner—a somewhat silent partner, you know! (*Close to him, excitedly*) Won't it be great fun? An office all our own with

nice, shiny furniture and everything! I've just been crazy to get into business for myself. Will you take me in?

MATT. If you want to come in.

FLORRY. I do—so it's settled.

MATT. Where shall we meet?

FLORRY. At the Hibernia Bank at ten o'clock in the morning.

MATT. I'll be there!

CAPPY. (*Off L.I.*) It can't be done, Skinner—it can't be done!

MATT. Ricks!

FLORENCE. (*Starts up for L.U.*) He mustn't see us together! (*Stops, turns.*) If you go into business, you won't go away to sea any more?

MATT. Of course not.

FLORRY. Then I'll consider the twenty thousand well invested—even if I lose it! (*Crosses up to door L.U.*)

MATT. (*As she reaches door*) Wait! (*FLORRY stops at door.*) You haven't told me your name!

FLORRY. (*Flabbergasted. Thinks hard. In desperation*) Goldie Blake! (*Runs out L.U., closing door.*)

MATT. (*Turns c. Makes wry face.*) Goldie Blake!

CAPPY. (*Entering, followed by SKINNER*) I tell you, Skinner, it can't be done in seventy-nine days. The record for a sailing ship from Cape Town to San Francisco is eighty-four days—made by a faster ship than the *Retriever* ever dared to be. (*Sees MATT.*) Hello! Who are you?

MATT. I'm a Blue Star officer, sir.

CAPPY. I can see that by your cap, you idiot! One of the hundred and one mates I pay and feed for doing nothing. Just come from the docks?

MATT. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. Know my barkentine *Retriever* when you see her?

MATT. Very well, sir.

CAPPY. We just got a phone from the Exchange saying she was in. Didn't see anything that looked like her, did you?

MATT. The *Retriever* is anchored off Meiggs' Wharf.

CAPPY. (*Gasps*) What? Are you sure?

MATT. Absolutely.

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) I guess it must be true, Skinner. That square-head Captain has made good. List him for a better ship.

SKINNER. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. (*Turns to MATT*) Now what do you want?

MATT. I've come to report, sir.

CAPPY. From what ship?

MATT. From the *Retriever*.

CAPPY. The *Retriever*! Why doesn't Captain Peterson report himself?

MATT. He just went up to the Marine Hospital.

CAPPY. (*Delighted*) Oh, took that scoundrel Peasley up there, eh? (*Turns to SKINNER.*) Skinner, that Swede's a wonder!

MATT. Captain Peterson went to the hospital alone, sir.

CAPPY. Eh? What's the matter with him?

MATT. He got badly smashed up at Cape Town.

CAPPY. How?

MATT. In a fight.

CAPPY. With whom?

MATT. Matt Peasley!

CAPPY. (*Screams*) You lie!

MATT. (*Starts for CAPPY*) Take that back, you old scoundrel, or I'll wring your neck!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Say, who the hell are you?

MATT. I'm Matt Peasley, damn you!

CAPPY. (*Almost faints*) Matt Peasley!

MATT. (*Advances on CAPPY*) Yes, and I won't be called a liar by any dry-land skipper that ever walked! (*Advances threateningly on CAPPY.*) Take it back, do you hear?

(CAPPY scurries in behind SKINNER; peeks around at MATT in terror. MATT is furious.)

MATT. Take it back, I say, or I'll heave you out the window!

CAPPY. (*Wildly*) Take it back, Skinner!

SKINNER. (*Conciliatingly*) Now, Mr. Peasley, Mr. Ricks didn't mean to call you a liar. He was excited.

MATT. Is that what Mr. Ricks says?

CAPPY. (*Pecking around SKINNER*) I stand behind Skinner in everything!

MATT. (*Advances*) That won't do! Do you take it back? (*Moves suddenly toward CAPPY.*)

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Yes! Yes!

MATT. (*Stops*) All right; that's different! (*Turns away.*)

CAPPY. (*Slaps SKINNER on back*) You're a wonder in an emergency, Skinner! You saved me that time! (*Crosses c. to MATT.*) See here, you big, overgrown, cock-o'-the-walk, you mean to tell me you licked that human mastodon, Peterson?

MATT. I did, and I made a good job of it, too!

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) Skinner—fire Peterson!

SKINNER. Very well, sir.

CAPPY. Now, young man, we'll settle our accounts.

MATT. The sooner, the better for me! (*Takes paper from pocket.*) Here—— (*Hands papers to CAPPY.*) You'll find everything straight.

CAPPY. (*Hands them to SKINNER*) Look 'em over, Skinner!

(SKINNER *takes papers and sorts them.* CAPPY *turns to MATT.*)

CAPPY. You mean to tell me that you brought the *Retriever* back from Cape Town in seventy-nine days?

MATT. I do!

CAPPY. Ahem-m! Probably ruined the ship!

MATT. The *Retriever* is in first-class condition, Mr. Ricks—could sail to-morrow.

CAPPY. Well, I suppose you know you've made us more trouble than any man we've ever had in our employ?

MATT. That's entirely your fault, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) My fault! My fault! How is it my fault?

MATT. If you had let me alone I would have brought the boat back just the same and there wouldn't have been any trouble.

CAPPY. Let you alone! Let you alone! Did you think I was going to leave a ship like the *Retriever* with a valuable cargo to the mercy of some dog-barking navigator I never heard of?

MATT. (*Starts for him*) Don't you call me a dog-barking navigator!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What are you, then?

MATT. I'm a deep sea navigator and able to manage any ship afloat!

CAPPY. Well, you'll never get a chance to manage any more of mine! You're fired!

MATT. Oh, no, I'm not!

CAPPY. Oh, yes, you are! You may consider yourself kicked out of the Blue Star employ right now!

MATT. You can't fire a man who has already fired himself.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What do you mean?

MATT. (*Points*) Mr. Skinner will find my resignation among those reports.

(SKINNER *hastily looks over papers.*)

CAPPY. (*Flabbergasted*) What?

MATT. Ask Skinner!

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) Skinner?

SKINNER. (*Takes out papers, looks at it*) Yes, here it is!

(CAPPY *looks disappointed.*)

MATT. And now, Mr. Cappy Ricks——

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Don't you call me "Cappy"!

MATT. Well, then, Mr. Alden P. Ricks, I'd like to have my vouchers certified so that I can get what's due me.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) You'll get what's due you! (*Turns to SKINNER.*) Skinner, what do I pay you ten thousand dollars a year for? Are you going to allow this young turkey-gobbler to cover us with blood and get away with it? Think of something, you durn fool—think of something!

SKINNER. (*With superior air*) I have already thought of something, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. (*Rubs hands*) Ah, fine! Fine! (*To MATT*) Now you'll get what's coming to you, Mr. Know-It-All! Skinner's a man with a brain! (*He pushes SKINNER forward.*) Go after him—annihilate him, Skinner!

SKINNER. (*With great importance*) Captain Peasley, your contention was that we couldn't discharge you because, being a mate and appointed by

the Captain, only the Captain has a right to discharge you, I believe?

MATT. Yes, sir.

SKINNER. However, you couldn't deny our right to appoint another Captain who *could* discharge you?

MATT. No, sir.

SKINNER. Still, when we sent on Captain Peterson and he presented his credentials, you refused to recognize them and assaulted him?

MATT. I refused to recognize the credentials he presented and defended myself from his assault.

SKINNER. Anyway, you refused to turn over the ship to him?

MATT. I did.

CAPPY. (*Cackles with delight*) Hurray, Skinner! (*Slaps SKINNER on back.*) You're a marvel! (*Shakes fist at MATT.*) That's mutiny on the high seas, young man!

SKINNER. (*To CAPPY*) Shall I phone the United States Marshall's office?

CAPPY. (*Dancing around with joy*) Yes, go ahead, Skinner! (*SKINNER crosses quickly to door L.I.*) We'll soon have this young Captain Kidd under lock and key!

(*SKINNER exits L.I., closing door. CAPPY faces MATT triumphantly.*)

CAPPY. Now I guess you'll crawl and eat dirt, young fellow!

MATT. (*Coolly*) Oh, I don't think so. I didn't get a chance to say what kind of credentials Captain Peterson presented.

CAPPY. His credentials were perfectly legal. I made sure of that before I sent him.

MATT. But he didn't present those.

CAPPY. What did he present?

MATT. His two fists. When he came aboard I asked him for his credentials, and he put up his fists

and said, "These are all the credentials you'll get from me!" I have the whole crew as witnesses.

CAPPY. But after the fight?

MATT. He wasn't in any condition to present anything after the fight.

CAPPY. (*Groans*) Then you didn't see his papers?

MATT. Not a paper!

CAPPY. (*Miscrably*) The infernal square-head!

MATT. And now, Mr. Ricks, you'd better cancel that phone call and fix it so I can get my money. I want to get out of here.

CAPPY. (*Thoroughly defeated*) Let's talk this over!

MATT. We've done enough talking! Who am I to see?

CAPPY. (*Indicates L.U.*) Go in there. The book-keeper will fix you up.

MATT. (*Goes up to L.U.*) All right! (*Turns at door.*) When you pick a row with one of your employees after this, make sure he isn't from Thomaston, Maine, where they grow real sailors! (*Exits—slams door.*)

CAPPY. (*Gasps*) Thomaston! (*Looks after MATT.*) Peasley—Thomaston! Ye Gods! (*Rushes down to L.I., opens door, yells off L.*) Skinner! Skinner! Come here, Skinner! (*Crosses back to L.C.*)

(SKINNER enters L.I. excitedly.)

SKINNER. Did you call, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. Did I call? You infernal idiot, if I had yelled any louder I would have split my throat! What were you doing in there?

SKINNER. I'm just about to get the United States Marshall's office.

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Is that all you have to do?

Is that what I pay you ten thousand dollars a year for?

SKINNER. (*Astounded*) Why, I thought——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) You thought—you thought! If you did a little real thinking once in awhile I wouldn't have to work my head off the way I do!

SKINNER. But you told me——

CAPPY. Not a peep out of you, sir, not a peep! You have the audacity to phone the United States Marshall to arrest this man Peasley? How dare you, sir? How dare you? He's a Down East boy from Thomaston, where I hail from. Why, the Peasleys are as thick in Thomaston as cooties in a trench. Why, when I was a youngster I used to pal around with a Matt Peasley! Why, damn it, sir, this boy's people and mine are buried side by side in the same cemetery! (SKINNER *nods and smiles softly*.) What do you mean by standing there and grinning, you infernal imbecile! Go in there and call off the dogs! (*Yells*) Get out! (SKINNER *starts to exit*. CAPPY *yells*) Skinner! (SKINNER *stops*. *Goes to him, confidentially*.) I'm going to give this cub command of the *Retriever*, and I want you to hunt all the dirty, filthy cargoes you can think of for him. We'll give this fresh young gobbler hell, Skinner—we'll show him he can't lick us!

SKINNER. (*Grins*) I'll do my best, sir! (*Exits L.I.—closes door.*)

(CAPPY *goes up to desk and sits. As he does so, MATT PEASLEY enters L.U., closing door. He has bundle of vouchers in his hand.*)

CAPPY. (*Leans back, thumbs in vest*) Well, young fellow—all set?

MATT. (*Holds up vouchers*) All set.

CAPPY. What do you figure on doing now?

MATT. Oh, I have things all planned out.

CAPPY. (*Jumps up*) Well, you can't sail a ship for any other firm out of here. I'll put a crimp in that!

MATT. You're a fine old bird, aren't you—keep a man out of a job, just because he got the best of you. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

CAPPY. Oh, don't worry, I'm not going to blacklist you. But I'm going to keep you from sailing for any other firm.

MATT. Why?

CAPPY. Because you're a good sailor and I need a Captain for the *Retriever*!

MATT. (*Overcome*) You mean——

CAPPY. (*Comes to him, slaps him on shoulder*) The *Retriever's* yours, my boy, to sail to Kingdom Come if you want to.

MATT. (*Shakes head*) I'm afraid I don't get you, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Clears throat*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! Ever know another Matt Peasley in Thomaston, Maine?

MATT. Matt Peasley was my uncle, sir.

CAPPY. And your father's name——

MATT. Ethan Peasley, sir!

CAPPY. (*Clears throat, looks at MATT*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! I might have known it—same cut, same bone, same brawn—hard as nails! I went to sea with your father, Matt, and he was every inch a sailor. The *Retriever's* yours, my boy!

MATT. I'm very grateful to you, Mr. Ricks, but—

CAPPY. Not a peep out of you, sir, not a peep! A knock-kneed, gawky kid like you ought to be tickled to death! (*Places hand on MATT's shoulder.*) Besides, I've got big things in view for you—you've got the real stuff in you. You didn't come in here with your hat in your hand—you came in here full of fight and scared me half to death—and

I love you for it! Matt, if you make good with the *Retriever*, I'm going to build you the finest steel freighter that ever sailed the Pacific!

MATT. (*Deeply touched*) I can't tell you how I appreciate your kindness, Mr. Ricks. You've proven yourself one of the finest men I have ever known. But I'm afraid I will have to refuse the *Retriever*.

CAPPY. (*Shrilly*) What d'ye mean—refuse!

MATT. I'm going to give up the sea!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What are you going to do?

MATT. I'm going into business for myself!

CAPPY. (*Shrilly*) Business! Business! Ha, ha! (*Rushes down to L.I., opens door, yells off L.*) Skinner! Skinner! (*Comes back to C., looking at MATT.*) SKINNER *rushes in from L.I.*

SKINNER. What's the matter, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. (*Indicates MATT derisively*) You see that lop-sided, gandle-shanked son of a sea-dog there?

SKINNER. (*Breathlessly*) Yes——

CAPPY. (*Almost hysterically*) I offered him the *Retriever*—offered to build him a fine steam freighter, and he refused it!

SKINNER. (*Horried*) What?

CAPPY. (*Shrilly*) Says he's going into business—get that, Skinner—a jack-tar going into business!

SKINNER. (*Scandalized*) Who ever heard of such a thing!

CAPPY. (*Faces MATT. Wags head*) Whose peanut stand are you going to buy out, young man?

MATT. (*Indignantly*) I'm going into the shipping business.

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Hear that, Skinner—the shipping business! Ha, ha! The shipping business! Going to buy all the ships on the Coast with those vouchers, I suppose!

MATT. I have a partner with twenty thousand dollars!

CAPPY. (*To SKINNER*) Hear that, Skinner—twenty thousand dollars! He's going to buy a fleet of rowboats! (*Snaps fingers at MATT.*) Well, when your twenty thousand is gone—when the bunch along this street have skinned you to the hide, don't come up here in a barrel and snivel for a job, because you won't get it!

MATT. Don't worry, Mr. Ricks. I won't ask you for anything. Anything I get from you I'll take without asking. You're all right, but it's war between us from now on. I'm going to make a fortune, something I couldn't do in a lifetime as a captain—and I'm going to make it quick, because I'll need it when I'm married.

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) Oh! Hear that, Skinner? He's going to get married!

MATT. You can bet your life I am! This has been a red-letter day for me. I've got my start in business and met my future wife!

CAPPY. Future wife! Where?

(*FLORRY opens door L.U. and stops in doorway, surprised.*)

MATT. (*At R.U.*) Right here in your office!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Who are you talking about?

MATT. (*Indicates FLORRY*) Your bookkeeper! (*Exits R.U.*)

(*CAPPY turns, sees FLORRY, yells and flops in SKINNER'S arms.*)

QUICK CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE: *Exterior of CAPPY RICKS' home, "Sea Look," just outside San Francisco. The house and grounds overlook the Pacific, with the headlands of the Golden Gate in the distance. Wall across back with steps up to c. Gate in wall L.U. House with veranda R. Door R.2. Exit below wall—return L.I. Bench L.C. Table and chairs R.C. Flagstaff in wall c. at top of steps.*

DISCOVERED: *At rise: LUCY RICKS, a pale, sweet lady of perhaps forty or older, is discovered standing at top of steps c. against wall, looking seaward through binoculars. A slight pause after rise, then CAPPY enters gate L.U. briskly. He is attired in Palm Beach and Panama. He stops up c. on seeing his sister.*

CAPPY. (*Heartily*) Where away, messmate?

LUCY. (*Starts, turns*) Mercy, Alden, how you startled me!

CAPPY. (*Following her down*) Was the ship coming in or going out?

LUCY. (*Goes to table; places binoculars in case*) Coming in!

CAPPY. Blue Star?

LUCY. No, a pennant I never saw before.

CAPPY. What was it?

LUCY. A yellow field with a red diamond.

CAPPY. Damn the Red Diamond!

LUCY. (*Shocked*) Alden Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Recovers*) Excuse me, sister, but that's

all I've been hearing the last five weeks—"Red Diamond," "Red Diamond!" And now I come home and get it here. It's getting on my nerves!

LUCY. What is the red diamond?

CAPPY. It's one of those mushroom companies that spring up one night and disappear the next.

LUCY. Well, then it shouldn't worry you.

CAPPY. Well, it does worry me! That Red Diamond outfit has been walking all over us—got us covered with blood—and I can't lay my fingers on 'em. Fight from ambush all the time!

(FLORRY *enters from house to porch unobserved by others. She is about to run down steps to CAPPY, when she hears the rest of his speech.*)

CAPPY. I'd give a thousand dollars this minute to anybody who would tell me who is behind that Red Diamond Company!

LUCY. That ought to be easy to find out.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) If it was, don't you suppose I would have found it out long ago? No, siree, that bunch has covered up their tracks too cleverly. Transact all their business under their corporation name and through a broker named Matt Peasley. Just slink around in the dark and stab people in the back.

(FLORRY *tries hard to restrain her laughter.*)

LUCY. (*Shocked*) They haven't tried to stab you, Alden?

CAPPY. Oh, yes, they have. They've not only tried, but they've done it! Got me bleeding all over. (*Faces her vehemently.*) Why, do you know, I had my eye on a steamer for five years—a ship that had been tied up by litigation—hoping to buy her up cheap when she was released, and those Red

Diamond scalawags got in ahead of me and snapped her up on a shoestring!

LUCY. Why, the idea!

CAPPY. Slipped in on the inside somehow and got that ship released six months before we figured—bought her for two hundred thousand dollars, and sold her to the Cape Town Navigation Company within a week for a third more than they paid for her!

LUCY. Well, that sounds like good business!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Good business! No business about it! Just plain darn fool luck! Wouldn't happen again in fifty years! (*Paces up and down excitedly.*) And here two weeks ago I had a fine cargo all ribbed up for my steamer *Quickstep*. I let the signing on the contract go over a day, and this infernal Red Diamond outfit stepped in and underbid me! (*Faces LUCY. Vehemently*) I had to see that cargo whipped away under my very nose and loaded on a dinky little coaster they chartered for about a nickel.

(*FLORRY stuffs her handkerchief into her mouth and runs into house.*)

LUCY. Well, well! I never knew anybody to get ahead of you, Alden.

CAPPY. Oh, they haven't got ahead of me, not by a long shot! I'll get 'em yet! (*Faces her.*) Took two of my very best captains away from me—men who have been with the Blue Star for years and owned an interest in their ships. Sold out and left me cold!

LUCY. Why, I never heard of such a thing!

CAPPY. (*Fuming*) Leave the Blue Star, a five-million-dollar corporation, to go with a fly-by-night, shoe-string, mushroom company that's liable to hit the ceiling any minute. (*Faces LUCY—shakes finger*

at her.) But those captains are going to be the sorriest sea-dogs that ever lived before I'm through with 'em! I'm going to slaughter that Red Diamond concern and dance a hootchy-kootchy on its grave! And those captains will have to crawl to me on their hands and knees and lick my shoes before they even get a look-in with the Blue Star again! (*Mops brow.*) Skinner hasn't called up, has he? (*Sits on bench.*)

LUCY. I don't think so.

CAPPY. Then he'll be here. I phoned the office and left word for him to come out and bring my secretary. Got some business on hand.

LUCY. Weren't you at the office to-day?

CAPPY. Haven't been there since morning—been on the Exchange all day. Great day, Lucy—great day! Right from gong to gong—blood all over the place!

LUCY. (*Goes to him—seriously*) Why don't you begin to take it easier, brother? You're not as young as you were and this continued excitement is telling on you. You already have more money than any of us will ever need, and you could retire now and——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Retire! Retire! Plenty of time to retire when a man gets old!

LUCY. Why, Alden Ricks, you're sixty!

CAPPY. You don't call that old, do you? I'm just a kid yet! But you're right about the money—I don't give a continental about that except that it furnishes the sinews of war. I'm in the game for the love of the fight—for the thrill of victory. That's why I'm tickled to death over this Red Diamond row. Things are coming too easy for us—nobody left to fight—everybody licked. And now I'm into it up to my neck again and my heart is just screaming with joy. Why, Lucy, by the time I have demolished, pulverized and obliterated this Red Diamond

bunch, I'll be ten years younger. (*Piano heard from house, playing any up-to-date song of the sea. CAPPY listens. After a pause. Smiles.*) Florry seems happy, these days.

LUCY. Yes, she seems happy all the time now. I can't understand what has come over that girl lately—she has changed so in just the last few weeks. Six weeks ago she was moping around all the time and nothing seemed to interest her. But now she's bright and eager all the time.

CAPPY. (*Scratches chin reflectively*) Found out anything about where she goes so often?

LUCY. No, she won't tell me a thing. I tried to pump the chauffeur, but he doesn't seem to know. She leaves the motor at a certain corner each time, and that's all he could tell me. She went this morning—just got home a few minutes ago. You really ought to keep a closer watch on that child, Alden.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What! Keep a watch on my Florry? Well, I guess not! She can go wherever she pleases whenever she pleases. If I couldn't trust her I wouldn't want to live! (*Struts to c.*)

LUCY. But where do you suppose she goes? (*Sits R. of table.*)

CAPPY. Oh, chasing around in the interests of that fool African Pygmies Uplift Society, I suppose. (*Piano heard again from house. Same song. After pause.*) The springtime of youth—God bless her! (*Smiles—crosses back to L. of table.*) Lucy, I'd give that girl the moon, if she asked for it! She gets romance out of life that has been denied you and me. My romance faded when her mother was taken from me in the morning of her life—yours when your sailor lover went down to the sea and found a sailor's grave——

LUCY. (*Pained—breaks in*) Don't, Alden, please don't!

CAPPY. You are right, Lucy—we're getting old—

both of us. But you love Florry almost as much as I do, so we both have something to live for. (*Smiles.*) And maybe we can steal a little sunshine for ourselves out of what we are gathering for her. She's young and won't miss it—perhaps. (*Crosses to c. Blows nose.* LUCY turns away, wiping her eyes furtively with handkerchief. CAPPY yells at LUCY.) There you go, snivelling! What d'ye mean by snivelling like that—makes me feel like a dinged idiot!

LUCY. (*Indignantly—rises and crosses to c.*) Why, Alden, I wasn't—

CAPPY. Yes, you were—don't contradict me!

LUCY. But I—

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Not a peep out of you—not a peep! Don't you suppose I know when you're snivelling? You'll have me one of those doddering old pappies with slippers and a cap, the first thing I know! (*Goes toward house.*) Let me know the minute Skinner shows up!

LUCY. I will, Alden. (*As CAPPY reaches R.C., FLORRY runs on from house and into his arms.*)

FLORRIE. Daddie! (*Kisses him.*)

CAPPY. (*Holding her off, looking at her*) Hello, girl—how are you?

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) Just splendid!

CAPPY. How's the African Pygmies Society coming on?

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) Oh, that is sailing the Sea of Prosperity! (*Cuddles up to him.*) And now, Popsy—

CAPPY. (*Yells*) And now, Popsy! (*To LUCY*) Stand by, Lucy—I'm going to be robbed!

FLORRY. Not this time, Popsy—the shoe is on the other foot! (*Takes draft from bosom. Holds it out.*) Behold!

CAPPY. (*Looks at draft*) What in tarnation is this?

FLORRY. The twenty thousand dollars I borrowed from you.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What! (*Turns to sister.*) Lucy, am I dreaming or am I just plain crazy! She's actually returning money she squeezed out of me! (*Takes check. Looks at it.*) Twenty thousand one hundred and thirty-eight dollars and eight cents! (*To FLORRY*) What's the one hundred and thirty-eight dollars and eight cents for?

FLORRY. (*To L. of table*) Six per cent interest—six weeks.

CAPPY. (*Imitates her*) Six per cent—six weeks! (*To LUCY*) She talks like a bank clerk! (*To FLORRY*) Didn't need the money, eh? What's the matter—all the pygmies die?

FLORRY. (*Goes to R. of table*) No—but we got enough without spending yours.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Oh, is that so! My money's no good, I suppose—tainted or something! I'm not to be represented in the African Pygmies Uplift Society—I'm just a little cipher with two legs on one end—don't even cast a shadow! (*Yells*) Who's the head of that society?

FLORRY. Mrs. Murphy-Stanchfield.

CAPPY. Well, I'm going to send Mrs. Murphy-Stanchfield a check for fifty thousand dollars in the morning. If she doesn't accept it, I'll put her husband out of business!

FLORRY. But, Father——

CAPPY. Not a peep out of you, Miss—not a peep! Scorn my money, eh? Well, we'll see about that! (*Holds out draft to her.*) Now you just take back your little draft and paste it in your scrap-book!

FLORRY. (*Crosses to L. of table, places hands behind her*) I won't take it!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What!

FLORRY. I won't take it, I say! I used that

money to get more. It has served its purpose and I'm through with it.

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Through with it! Through with it! (*Holds out draft.*) You take this draft, Miss, or I'll——

FLORRY. I won't take it, I tell you!

CAPPY. (*Screams*) You will!

FLORRY. I'll not! (*Stamps foot, crosses up and looks off back.*)

(CAPPY looks after her in amazement, then chuckles.
Goes to LUCY.)

CAPPY. (*Confidentially, to LUCY*) Say, Sis—— (*Jerks thumb toward FLORRY.*) Just like me—don't you think?

LUCY. Exactly like you, Alden.

CAPPY. (*Chuckles, rubs hands*) Won't be licked! Just like every other Ricks. (*Tears draft up and tosses it in air.*) Just a damn fool! (*Chuckles and exits into house quickly.*)

(LUCY looks after him, smiles and shakes head.

FLORRY comes down, stops on seeing pieces of draft.)

FLORRY. (*Indicating pieces of paper*) Did he destroy that draft?

LUCY. Yes. Alden is so excitable!

FLORRY. (*Almost crying*) Excitable? He's a mean, stubborn——

LUCY. (*Gently*) Now, Florry!

FLORRY. (*Tearfully*) I know, Auntie—but he might let me be independent—just once!

LUCY. You know he just won't be beaten, Florry. (*Places arm about her.*) And you can afford to be generous, dear—you have a whole lifetime of victory ahead of you. And you know how he loves you.

FLORRY. (*Tenderly*) Yes, I know, dear—and I love him! But our ideas are different. He thinks a woman should only have one mission in life—marriage. He looks on me just as he would a piece of rare bric-a-brac—to care for and admire.

LUCY. He is a bit old-fashioned, but——

FLORRY. (*Laughs, pats Lucy's shoulder*) There, Auntie—I'm not a bit angry at him. I'm just too happy these days to be angry at anyone.

LUCY. You've changed a great deal lately, Florry. Alden and I were just speaking of it.

FLORRY. (*Enthusiastically*) I have changed. I have found my life and I'm satisfied—I'm doing things—(*Crosses to L.C.*)—accomplishing things—and—— (*Laughs.*) I'm the proud possessor of a secret!

LUCY. Oh, do tell me what it is!

FLORRY. (*Shakes finger*) Oh, then it wouldn't be a secret any more!

LUCY. (*Excitedly*) But I'll not tell anyone—honest I won't.

FLORRY. (*Hugs her*) You adorable old traitor—father would scare it out of you in two minutes!

LUCY. Is it—is it—a love secret?

FLORRY. (*Back across to c. Shakes finger at her*) Ah—now, now——

LUCY. (*Pleadingly*) Please tell me, Florry. You get about and meet people—you have your future to look forward to—while Alden has the excitement of his business. (*Sadly*) But it is different with me—I—— (*Crosses below table.*)

FLORRY. (*Tenderly*) There, there, Auntie! (*Close to her.*) It's a man!

LUCY. (*Eagerly*) Who?

FLORRY. I can't tell you his name—but he's just the finest, cleanest, grandest fellow in the world!

LUCY. There must be something extraordinary

about him to attract you, Florry—you're so particular. Where did you meet him?

FLORRY. Now, now—you mustn't want to know too much. If father should hear of it there'd be smoke all over the place!

LUCY. Why?

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) Because he has stood up and fought father, and won.

LUCY. Yes, Alden can forgive anything but that! (*Close to FLORRY.*) Do you care for him a great deal, Florry?

FLORRY. (*Closes eyes, smiles, sighs*) I'm afraid I do! (*Earnestly*) But scarcely a word of affection has passed between us, Auntie!

LUCY. (*Gasps*) He hasn't made love to you!

FLORRY. Not the least little bit. Just sits and looks at me with adoring eyes!

LUCY. But are you sure he cares for you?

FLORRY. Oh, I know he does!

LUCY. How?

FLORRY. Because he seems to like it when I make love to him!

LUCY. (*Rises—flabbergasted*) Florence Ricks!

FLORRY. Well, what are you going to do in a case like that? Somebody has to do the love-making!

LUCY. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Florry!

FLORRY. (*Laughs, hugs LUCY*) Now, don't you worry, Auntie! I haven't done anything to belittle myself—even in his eyes—and he would be more exacting than you. I've just let him know that I cared for him and that I wouldn't be a bit angry if he took me in his arms and kissed me.

LUCY. (*Shakes head*) I don't know what girls are coming to! (*Seriously*) Are you sure he's the kind of a man your father——

FLORRY. (*Breaks in*) He's just the kind of a

man father would pick out for me—strong, two-fisted, unafraid—determined to succeed—beat the world at its own game. He and father have clashed and are clashing now—only father doesn't know it—but the time will come when father will take him by the hand and be glad to call him his son! (*Suddenly stops, sniffs.*) What in the world is that odor?

LUCY. (*Sniffs air*) Mercy! It smells like heliotrope!

FLORRY. There's no heliotrope around here! (*Turns L.*)

(*CECIL raises head above wall cautiously and peeks over L., just above gate.*)

CECIL. (*Waves hand*) Toot! Toot!

FLORRY. Cecil!

(*AUNT LUCY turns, startled.*)

CECIL. (*Grins*) Yes, it's Cecil! Or rather, what used to be Cecil!

FLORRY. Come right in, Cecil!

(*CECIL disappears and enters gate cautiously, comes down L.C.*)

CECIL. (*Looks around*) I say! Nifty little bal-
liwick you have here, you know!

FLORRY. (*To LUCY*) You remember Cecil Bernard, don't you, Auntie?

LUCY. Nicholas Bernard's boy?

FLORRY. Yes. Cecil, this is my aunt, Miss Ricks.

(*CECIL is attired in a rather disreputable sailor's outfit.*)

CECIL. (*Doffs cap*) Delighted, Miss Ricks!

LUCY. (*Shakes his hand, cordially*) I remember you as a little boy, Mr. Bernard. I knew your father and mother quite well when I was a girl in Thomaston.

CECIL. Oh, yes, the old Guvvy's quite dotty over Thomaston. (*To FLORRY, anxiously*) I say, what time does your father get home from his office, Miss Florence?

FLORRY. He's in the house now.

CECIL. (*Frightened*) He is! (*Starts up toward gate.*) I think I'll be going, then!

FLORRY. No, no! You mustn't run away!

CECIL. I might as well run now as later on. I won't have to run so fast!

FLORRY. What are you talking about?

CECIL. Well, your father sent me word that if I showed up around you before I was at least a first mate, he'd put me out of my misery, as he termed it. And I'm not a first mate—and I never will be a first mate, you know!

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) Oh, father wouldn't harm you!

CECIL. Well, I'm not going to gamble on it! (*Starts up.*)

FLORRY. (*Stops him*) Now, you just wait a minute! (*Turns to LUCY.*) Aunt Lucy, you go in and keep father busy while I talk to Cecil.

LUCY. But if he took a notion to come out——

FLORRY. You just call me—I'll know what you mean.

LUCY. (*Laughs*) Well, I'll do what I can! (*Goes up to porch, turns.*) You'll remain for tea, Mr. Bernard?

CECIL. Oh, no, thank you, I—I'm afraid Mr. Ricks doesn't serve the kind of tea I like! (*LUCY laughs and exits. CECIL to FLORRY anxiously*) Do

—do you notice anything peculiar about me, Miss Florence?

FLORRY. Well, your clothes——

CECIL. (*Hastily*) No, no—I don't mean that! Any unusual odor?

FLORRY. Is it you that has all that heliotrope on you?

CECIL. I'm just saturated with it—clothes and all—even drank some!

FLORRY. Good gracious! Why?

CECIL. You know where I've been working, don't you?

FLORRY. On one of father's boats.

CECIL. Yes, a fertilizer boat running between here and the Faralones. Have you ever been on a fertilizer boat?

FLORRY. No.

CECIL. Well, don't ever go on one. A glue factory is a garden of roses beside it. The one I'm on is called the *Sweet Clover*, and when another ship sights her at sea, it goes twenty miles out of its course to avoid her.

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) She must be pleasant to live on!

CECIL. Oh, it's dreadful, Miss Florence, dreadful! I spent a whole month's pay on heliotrope before I dared to come up town. If I hadn't, the Health Department would have buried me.

FLORRY. Poor Cecil!

CECIL. (*Sighs*) But I feel it will soon be over now!

FLORRY. Father going to put you on another ship?

CECIL. No! I've found Goldie!

FLORRY. (*Interested*) You have! Where?

CECIL. I received a letter from her when we got in this morning. You were the means of bringing us together, Miss Florry!

FLORRY. I? What do you mean?

CECIL. She said in her letter that she heard you speaking of me to your father and he mentioned the *Sweet Clover*. (*Takes out letter—kisses it.*) Goldie!

FLORRY. Why, I don't even know her!

CECIL. Oh, yes, you do! The show she was with broke up here and she got a position with the Blue Star.

FLORRY. In the office?

CECIL. Yes.

FLORRY. What does she do?

CECIL. She's your father's confidential secretary!

FLORRY. (*Rises—gasps*) Ellen Murray!

CECIL. Yes, her real name is Ellen Murray, but her stage name is Goldie Blake—and that's the name I love!

FLORRY. Why, the little minx! I worked there in the office beside her for a whole week—and she never said a word to me!

CECIL. Of course not. She knows how most people look on people who have been on the stage, and she was afraid it would make a difference with you. She told me that in her letter. (*Earnestly*) But she's really a very fine girl, Miss Florence!

FLORRY. I know she is, and she is the best secretary father has ever had. I admire your judgment, Cecil.

CECIL. Thanks awfully—that helps, you know, because I'm afraid I shall have to call upon you for assistance. You see, she doesn't know I don't dare to go to the office, so she didn't give me her home address. You would do me an everlasting favor if you could arrange a meeting for us, Miss Florence.

FLORRY. I certainly can. You shall see her first thing in the morning!

CECIL. I say, that's ripping of you, don't you know! Then if I can get my clothes from Captain

Olson, we will be married as soon as I can obtain funds somewhere.

FLORRY. Who is Captain Olson?

CECIL. He is the Captain of the *Sweet Clover*.

FLORRY. What is he doing with your clothes?

CECIL. He took them from me as soon as we got to sea. He said it was your father's orders.

FLORRY. Why, what a high-handed thing to do!

CECIL. Wasn't it? But he did it! And he was awfully rough with me until he found out I could play pinochle. Since that we have got to be quite chummy. Not a bad fellow, you know, and they say he's the best captain in the Blue Star service.

FLORRY. What's he doing on a boat like the *Sweet Clover*?

CECIL. He and your father had a misunderstanding one time, and Captain Olson wouldn't give in. So your father put him where he is.

FLORRY. Why, the idea! (*Suddenly*) Do you think he'd leave if he had a better job offered him?

CECIL. I'm sure of it.

FLORRY. (*Eagerly*) Cecil, would you like to make five hundred dollars?

CECIL. Would I? Five hundred would give Goldie and me just the start we need.

FLORRY. Well, you can earn it.

CECIL. How, Miss Florence?

FLORRY. Just do your best to get Captain Olson to leave the Blue Star. Assure him that the moment he leaves, the Red Diamond will give him a ship at a third more salary than the Blue Star is paying him.

CECIL. But he's working for your father!

FLORRY. I know that, silly!

CECIL. But I don't understand why—

FLORRY. I can't tell you why, but I have a reason. The question is—will you do it?

CECIL. Of course I'll do it—I'd do anything to

get back at your father. He's made me suffer, he has.

FLORRY. All right! I'll arrange for you and Ellen to meet, and I'll give Ellen a check for five hundred dollars to give to you!

CECIL. I say, you're awfully kind, Miss Florence——

LUCY. (*Off in house R.*) Florry! Florry!

CECIL. (*Jumps*) Your father's coming! Here's where I evaporate! (*Runs up to gate, stops suddenly, looking off L.*) Oh, Lord!

FLORRY. (*Goes up to him*) What is it?

CECIL. A car just stopped out there!

FLORRY. Why, it's Mr. Skinner!

CECIL. There's a woman with him. (*Starts excitedly*) Can it be—— (*Shouts.*) Yes, it is! (*Starts off L.*)

FLORRY. (*Seizes his coat*) Wait! You don't want father to know you're here, do you?

CECIL. I should say not!

FLORRY. Mr. Skinner will be sure to tell him!

CECIL. (*Despairingly*) What will I do, then?

FLORRY. You'll have to wait somewhere till the coast is clear!

CECIL. Where?

FLORRY. (*Indicates down L.I.*) Out there in the grove! You can see everything from there and when Ellen's alone you can call her!

CECIL. (*Goes down to L.I.*) That's a good idea. (*Stops at L.I.*) Oh, Miss Florence!

FLORRY. Yes?

CECIL. Give Goldie a kiss for me!

FLORRY. (*Looking off L.*) Yes. Hurry!

CECIL. (*Starts, stops, turns*) I say!

FLORRY. (*Impatiently*) Yes, yes!

CECIL. Give her two! (*Exits L.I.*)

(SKINNER enters L.U., followed by ELLEN.)

SKINNER. (*Removes hat*) Ah, good afternoon, Miss Ricks!

FLORRY. Good afternoon, Mr. Skinner!

SKINNER. Father waiting for me?

FLORRY. He's in the house. (*Goes to ELLEN.*) Ellen, you look positively glorious!

ELLEN. Thank you, Miss Florence. I'm feeling splendid.

FLORRY. You should come out to Sea Look oftener. You're always welcome, you know.

ELLEN. Thank you. But we've been so busy at the office.

SKINNER. There's a new company called the Red Diamond that's been keeping us on the jump.

FLORRY. (*Smiles*) Yes, I heard about it. The people behind it seem to be wide awake.

SKINNER. Unscrupulous would be a better term, Miss Ricks. They violate every rule of conservative business!

FLORRY. Then they'll probably succeed.

(CAPPY enters to porch from house—bows to ELLEN.)

CAPPY. How d'ye do, Miss Murray! Welcome to Sea Look!

ELLEN. Thank you, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. (*Looking at watch*) You're late, Skinner!

SKINNER. (*Looking at watch*) You said four o'clock.

CAPPY. It's two minutes past four.

SKINNER. Well, it took us a minute to get up here from the car and we've been here——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Damn it, sir, don't split hairs with me! (*Comes down.*) You girls run in the house. I want to talk with Skinner.

FLORRY. (*Drags ELLEN to steps*) Yes, come on, Ellen. I've got something to tell you.

CAPPY. (*As girls reach steps*) Say, Miss Murray——

ELLEN. (*Turns*) Yes, sir?

CAPPY. Be on the job in case I wait you.

ELLEN. I'll be ready any time, sir.

CAPPY. (*Goes to behind table. Indicates chair R. of table to SKINNER*) Have a seat, Skinner.

SKINNER. (*Briefly, as he sits*) Thank you, sir.

CAPPY. Anything new at the office this afternoon?

SKINNER. Nothing important. Gordon reported that they have ascertained nothing definite concerning the backers of the Red Diamond.

CAPPY. Of course they haven't. Nobody can find out anything—even the record of incorporation has conveniently disappeared!—big money used some place! (*Shakes finger at SKINNER.*) I tell you, Skinner, something has got to be done about this Red Diamond. They've made me the laughing stock of the Street! I'd give a hundred thousand dollars right now to put 'em out of business. (*Faces SKINNER.*) What do you think of their latest stunt?

SKINNER. (*Stalling*) Oh—er—you mean about Captain——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) No, I don't mean about Captain anybody—that's two weeks old! Haven't heard the latest, eh?

SKINNER. (*Apologetically*) Well—I don't think so——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Of course you haven't—that's what I pay you ten thousand dollars a year for—to be deaf and dumb! You've been asleep, Skinner—dead to the world—and the Red Diamond has stolen your pants! (*Rises and crosses down L. of table.*)

SKINNER. (*Apprehensively*) Why—what have they done now?

CAPPY. (*Sarcastically*) Oh, nothing important.

Just grabbed up our contract with the St. Paul and Tacoma Milling Company—not five minutes after our agreement expired. Tied it up for five years, Skinner. We're the merry ha! ha! of the Exchange!

SKINNER. (*Half rises*) They did that!

CAPPY. They did! Kind of lifts you out of your skin, doesn't it? That contract's a nice little nest egg for any shipping company—worth a hundred thousand dollars a year!

SKINNER. (*Helplessly*) But—but that contract has elapsed before and the mill people have always asked for a renewal!

CAPPY. And we've always given it to 'em, and boosted the rate. And so, at the first opportunity, they've handed us a slap in the eye, and I don't blame 'em! The trouble is, Skinner, we've been drifting along too damn comfortably—no wide-awake competitors to make us jump!

SKINNER. What are we going to do, sir?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Do? Do? We're going to start a rumpus with that Red Diamond outfit that will annihilate 'em—wipe 'em off the map!

SKINNER. What do you propose, sir?

CAPPY. Well, there's a big slump coming in the shipping business—everything points to it. If this Red Diamond hasn't a lot of capital behind it, it can't stand any pressure during a slump. Know anything about their assets?

SKINNER. Yes, sir. They command a surplus of about one hundred and eighty thousand dollars.

CAPPY. Fine, Skinner, fine! You're a walking Bradstreet! You can smell out a bank account like a hound dog can scent a coon. Well, in case of a big slump, if we're wide awake and turn on the screws, at the right time, that hundred and eighty thousand dollars will last about ten minutes!

SKINNER. Just about!

CAPPY. And we're going to be wide awake! I've

seen thirty-seven mushroom shipping companies painlessly extracted and buried in my private graveyard since I've been in businss here——

(MATT PEASLEY *enters* L.U. and quietly comes down to beside CAPPY. CAPPY is leaning over L. side of table and screens MATT from SKINNER.)

CAPPY. (*Pounds table*) And this Red Diamond is going to be the thirty-eighth. It shall have a nice little plot all by itself, with a beautifully engraved monument, inscribed: "To the Memory of the Red Diamond Navigation Company, strangled in infancy by Alden P. Ricks."

MATT. But he walked the floor nights with it while it lived.

(CAPPY whirls around, almost falling over table.)

CAPPY. (*Screams*) By the Holy Pink-toed Prophet, what hot place did you come from?

MATT. From your office.

CAPPY. You bet my office is hot for birds like you—it's poison! (*Faces MATT aggressively.*) How dare you to intrude yourself here uninvited?

MATT. I went to your office and was told that both you and Skinner were out here. So, as I had to see you, I came out.

CAPPY. Cranked up your little Henry Ford and got busy, eh?

MATT. I don't own a little Henry Ford yet, but I hope to some day. I came out on the street car.

CAPPY. (*To SKINNER—points to MATT derisively*) Skinner, size up this poverty-stricken gentleman with a dinky brief-case. He's the hi-yu-muck-amuck who stood in my office six weeks ago and told me he was going into the shipping business and lick the Blue Star off the seas!

SKINNER. I see him.

CAPPY. Well, you won't see much more of him! (*Faces MATT.*) If you're after a job, I need a deck-hand on one of my tugboats.

MATT. No, I'm still in the marine brokerage business, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. Oh, hanging on to that, eh? Got a two-by-four office on the 'steenth floor of a tumble-down office building, and kidding yourself that you're in business. Broker, bah! You'll be broker than that before you get through. (*Arms akimbo.*) Now what d'ye want? Shoot it and get out—I'm busy!

MATT. That suits me! You've got two ships—twin steamers, the *Lion* and the *Unicorn*. They've been anchored over there in the boneyard for over a year because they're lake freighters and not suited to either deep-sea or coast trade.

CAPPY. Yes, I call 'em my two blunders—no business buying 'em. Skinner's fault.

SKINNER. (*Goes to below table—indignantly*) Now, Mr. Ricks—

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Not a peep out of you, sir—not a peep! (*Faces MATT.*) Well, what about 'em, Mr. Peasley?

MATT. Now those steamers are not earning a penny—big expense—and when a ship lies idle—

CAPPY. (*Yells*) We know that!

MATT. Well, I'm authorized to make you an offer for those boats.

CAPPY. Charter or buy?

MATT. Buy—cash and time payments.

CAPPY. Those are valuable boats, young man.

MATT. I know what they're worth to a nickel! I'm authorized to offer you two hundred and fifty thousand dollars apiece for them—half a million for the two.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What! Those two vessels cost

eight hundred thousand dollars when they were launched!

MATT. Yes, but you didn't pay that for them!

CAPPY. How do you know I didn't?

MATT. I know exactly what you paid—five hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

CAPPY. That's right! And that's exactly what we'll sell 'em for—five hundred and fifty thousand dollars—not a cent less.

MATT. Five hundred thousand dollars flat, less my ten per cent commission—not a cent more!

CAPPY. Your ten per cent?

MATT. Certainly.

CAPPY. You're going to sting me for ten per cent commission?

MATT. That's the usual procedure, isn't it? I'm not in the brokerage game for my health!

CAPPY. (*Sneers*) You've got a fat chance!

MATT. (*Moves to go*) All right!

CAPPY. (*Quickly*) Who do you represent in this?

MATT. (*Turns*) The Red Diamond Navigation Company.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What! That outlaw outfit?

MATT. I'm their representative, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) What d'ye think, Skinner?

SKINNER. (*With dignity*) The Blue Star doesn't do business with concerns like the Red Diamond, Mr. Peasley!

MATT. (*Starts up*) All right—that settles it!

CAPPY. (*As MATT gets up L.*) Wait a minute! (*MATT stops up L. and turns. CAPPY indicates SKINNER.*) Let me talk to my General Manager!

MATT. Go ahead—talk your head off. (*Strolls up to gate, looks off L.*)

CAPPY. (*Close to SKINNER*) Skinner, you're a damn fool!

SKINNER. (*Protestingly*) But, Mr. Ricks—

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Not a peep out of you, sir, not a peep! (*Confidentially*) Can't you see that this is our great chance to settle the Red Diamond's hash forever?

SKINNER. (*Astonished*) I don't understand—

CAPPY. Of course you don't—if you did, you'd be worth your salary! They can't pay cash for those ships—we'll sting 'em for a flat cash payment—say a hundred thousand dollars. That'll only leave 'em eighty thousand dollars surplus. Then when the slump comes and they can't find trade for those boats, they're bound to default, and we won't give 'em an inch! The first time they miss a payment, we'll just grab the ships, pocket all they've paid in—then good-bye Red Diamond forever. See?

SKINNER. Yes, I see! Great idea!

CAPPY. (*Taps head*) I've got something in here besides sawdust, Skinner! (*Touches SKINNER.*) Now you just watch me flim-flam this poor innocent! (*Turns to MATT. Clears throat.*) Ahem-h! Harumph-h! Oh, Mr. Peasley! (*MATT turns and comes c.*) How much are your clients prepared to pay down?

MATT. How much do you want?

CAPPY. We shall demand a hundred thousand dollars, at least.

MATT. I have a draft for that amount here. We figured on paying that much down—balance, fifty thousand dollars monthly—six per cent.

CAPPY. That's reasonable. (*Clears throat, winks at SKINNER.*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! Well, we'll accept your offer, Mr. Peasley. Purchase price, five hundred thousand dollars—one hundred thousand down, balance in monthly payments of fifty thousand—six per cent, that right?

MATT. Less ten per cent commission for me, to be deducted from first payment.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What? Why, that would cut the deposit in half!

MATT. That is my agreement with the Red Diamond.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Of course! The Red Diamond doesn't give a whoop how much money you steal from me. I won't do it.

MATT. (*Turns away*) Very well. (*Starts up L.*)

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Wait a minute! (*MATT comes down.*) You're wearing a path up to that gate! (*Clears throat.*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! I guess I can afford to put a few thousand in the way of a poor piker like you. I'm after the Red Diamond—and this deal is going to get 'em for me. Appreciate that?

MATT. Your troubles with the Red Diamond are none of my business.

CAPPY. That's right! You'll sign up now?

MATT. The sooner the better, Mr. Ricks.

(*FLORRY appears in doorway of house. MATT sees her and starts. FLORRY signals silence and disappears.*)

CAPPY. All right! Come in the house and I'll have Skinner draw up the contracts and agreements.

MATT. (*Looking to where FLORRY has disappeared*) If you don't mind, I'll wait out here. Perhaps you and Mr. Skinner would like to talk it over alone.

CAPPY. Suit yourself. It'll take a little time, though!

MATT. I'll wait. I have plenty of time.

CAPPY. (*Sarcastically*) Yes, you can afford to wait an hour or so for fifty thousand dollars. (*Goes up to porch.*) Come on, Skinner! (*SKINNER follows him up. CAPPY turns on porch.*) Young man,

I know a place where you can invest that commission.

MATT. So do I.

CAPPY. Where?

MATT. (*Grins*) In a Henry Ford.

CAPPY. (*Disgusted*) Huh! Isn't he a smart little boy, Skinner? (*Exits into house, followed by SKINNER.*)

(*After their exit, MATT watches them and expectantly for FLORRY. After a pause, FLORRY enters cautiously, looking behind her till she reaches top of steps, then scampers down to MATT.*)

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) How did it come out?

MATT. Beautifully!

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) You don't mean that they'll really sell?

MATT. They've gone in to draw up the papers.

FLORRY. At our price?

MATT. To a nickel! (*Laughs.*) I had Alden P. Ricks almost eating out of our hand. He's going to use those ships to put the Red Diamond out of business!

FLORRY. (*Laughs heartily*) Isn't that funny?

MATT. (*Laughing*) And I stung him for ten per cent commission as broker, besides!

FLORRY. You didn't!

MATT. Surest thing you know! That fifty thousand will mean more to us than to him. And money is ammunition, you know!

FLORRY. (*Enthusiastically*) Matt, you're just wonderful!

MATT. Oh, I'm not taking the credit. If you hadn't intercepted that phone message from the representative of the Great Lakes Navigation Company last evening——

FLORRY. (*Breaks in*) But that was merely luck. But it took real business ability on your part to convince them that we held an option on those ships. (*Changes.*) Matt, it seems almost immoral!

MATT. Rather sharp business, I admit, but it's no more than old Ricks would have done to us if he had the chance. He's not selling those ships because he wants to make a legitimate trade, but because he wants to use them as weapons against the Red Diamond.

FLORRY. Do you really think that is it?

MATT. I know it. He's selling below what he paid for them, and Alden P. Ricks isn't the man to let anything slip through his fingers at a loss, unless there's a nigger in the woodpile somewhere. Why, that old rascal would knife his mother in a business deal!

FLORRY. I wish you wouldn't speak so of him, Matt. He's really the best hearted person in the world!

MATT. But not in business.

FLORRY. I know that. But he has been so good to me!

MATT. There, I won't say another word against him. I know he has been good to you, but I also know that if he found out you were connected with the Red Diamond he'd fire you this minute and leave no stone unturned to ruin you financially. (*Pauses.*) Well, you'll have to leave shortly, anyway.

FLORRY. (*Startled*) Why?

MATT. Because, after this deal is cinched, I'm coming out in the open. I'm sick of fighting from ambush.

FLORRY. You mean—reveal ourselves as owners of the Red Diamond?

MATT. Yes. After to-day the names of Peasley and Glake will go on every contract!

FLORRY. (*Quickly*) No, no, Matt—you mustn't do that! Really you mustn't!

MATT. I've got to do it, Goldie! I have held off this long out of respect for your wishes—and while it has worked pretty well so far, it is bound to react against us in the end. Besides, I want to meet Mr. Alden P. Ricks face to face, fight him toe to toe, and crow over him when I win. It's a man's game and I want to play it like a man!

FLORRY. I know, Matt, but sooner or later they would find out about me—and——

MATT. Well—what of it? You're not ashamed of the Red Diamond, are you? It has won a place for itself in shipping circles. We have reason to be proud of it now, but we're going to be prouder pretty soon!

FLORRY. Yes, when they find out that Glake is a woman——

MATT. Why, that will be the biggest joke of all. Think of what old Ricks will say when he finds out he has been walloped by a woman! (*Laughs.*) Why, he'll just curl up and die!

FLORRY. (*After a pause*) No, Matt—I just can't be known in this—I just can't.

MATT. But why not?

FLORRY. I can't tell you now—perhaps some day—but not now! (*With decision*) You're—— Matt, it is a man's game and a woman has no business in it. I'll draw out—sell out to you—so that you can come out and fight the way you want to.

MATT. Nonsense! Why, you're the biggest thing in the firm. I would have been down and out long ago but for you!

FLORRY. (*Smiles*) No, no!

MATT. Yes, I would! (*With a touch of tenderness*) Why, I just couldn't get along without you, Goldie!

FLORRY. I'm afraid you'll have to, Matt. (*He*

starts to speak. FLORRY *smiles, places hand on his lips.*) No, now—I won't run away—I'll always be near to advise you. But I'm not going to hold you back—you've got big things to do and I want you to do them. The Red Diamond has grown too big for poor little me, so I am going to sell out to you to-morrow!

MATT. (*Distressed*) No, no—I don't want you to, dear!

FLORRY. (*Delighted*) There! You've called me "Dear" for the first time, and as a reward you shall have my share in the firm at a sacrifice!

MATT. I won't take it!

FLORRY. You'll have to! You can't make me be a partner if I don't want to be, can you? (*Close to him.*) And, Matt—you'll miss your little business partner, just a little, won't you? You'll miss our conferences in your funny little office.

MATT. (*Pained*) Don't, dear—please don't!

FLORRY. Just think, in the whole six weeks we've known each other that's the only place we've met. That little office has grown very dear to me.

MATT. And to me, dear. I made up my mind when we became partners that I would never mix sentiment with business. (*Sighs.*) But it has been pretty hard at times! (*Crosses to settee.*)

FLORRY. That does settle it! I won't let business interfere with sentiment any longer! (*Close to him.*) You care a little, don't you, Matt?

MATT. (*Starts to embrace her—restrains himself*) I'll tell you the moment I buy you out!

FLORRY. (*Breathlessly*) Oh, Matt, buy me out now!

MATT. (*Laughs*) No, dear—to-morrow! But I'm going to tell Ricks that you are my partner.

FLORRY. (*Frightened*) No, no—you mustn't do that!

MATT. Yes, I will! I wouldn't miss handing him that jolt for anything. You have plenty of money of your own now, and you'll be out of the business after to-morrow, so he can't do you any harm that way.

FLORRY. But don't tell him while I'm present!

MATT. Why?

FLORRY. Oh, he gets so terribly angry!

MATT. Well, he'd better not say anything to you or I'll tan his hide!

(LUCY RICKS enters from house to porch.)

LUCY. (*As she enters*) Oh, dearie! (*Sees MATT, stops.*) Oh, I beg your pardon.

FLORRY. This is Captain Peasley, you've heard us speak of. Auntie! (*Introducing them.*) Captain Peasley, this is Miss Ricks, Mr. Ricks's sister.

MATT. (*Bows deeply*) Miss Ricks.

LUCY. (*Smiles*) I've heard some glowing accounts of you, Captain Peasley.

MATT. Thank you.

LUCY. And some not so glowing—from my brother.

MATT. (*Laughs*) Yes, I can well believe that!

FLORRY. What is it, Auntie?

LUCY. Why, I was going to ask you to help me with something—but—— (*Glances at MATT.*)

MATT. Oh, don't mind me!

FLORRY. I'll be right in, Auntie.

LUCY. It will only take a moment. (*To MATT*) You are of the Thomaston Peasleys, I understand?

MATT. (*Laughs*) Yes—all my family are from there.

LUCY. And a splendid family it is, too! (*Turns to go.*) You'll excuse me?

MATT. Certainly.

(*LUCY exits into house. MATT looks after her.*)

MATT. You called her "Auntie."

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) Of course. I've always called her that. You see, I've known her since I was a very little girl.

MATT. Oh, yes—that's so.

FLORRY. (*Runs up steps.*) I'll be right back. (*Turns on porch.*) Now, don't run away!

MATT. (*Laughs*) Oh, I've got to wait for Ricks and Skinner, you know!

FLORRY. All right! (*Runs into house.*)

(*MATT takes cigar from pocket and lights it. As he does so, CECIL peeks in L.I.*)

CECIL. Oh, I say!

MATT. (*Turns quickly*) Hello!

CECIL. (*Advances cautiously*) Is that rummy old party, Mr. Ricks, in the house, do you know?

MATT. Yes, he's busy just now.

CECIL. That's good. I hope he stays busy! (*Stops suddenly, stares at MATT.*) Oh, I say, you're Matt Peasley, the chap that demolished the terrible Swede, aren't you?

MATT. (*Recognizes CECIL*) Why, hello! Hanged if it isn't the little fellow I met at Ricks' office the day I got in!

CECIL. Righto! Cecil Pericles Bernard.

MATT. Well, how are you, anyway?

CECIL. Slightly tarnished—but that's to be expected under the circumstances.

MATT. (*Looking at his clothes*) I see you are a sailor now.

CECIL. Well, I've been trying to be one, but without much success. (*Looks at clothes.*) Rummy looking clothes, aren't they?

MATT. Serviceable, though. What ship?

CECIL. *Sweet Clover*, between here and the Faralones.

MATT. Fertilizer boat, isn't it?

CECIL. (*Sadly*) Yes—she is.

MATT. Pretty strong job.

CECIL. Yes, overwhelming. When I quit it I am going to find something pleasant to do—driving a garbage wagon or cleaning sewers.

MATT. Want to see Ricks?

CECIL. No, indeed. I know what he looks like and I'm satisfied. But I'm waiting around here to see someone else.

MATT. Oh!

CECIL. (*With a flourish*) The best, the sweetest, the most divine—the most beautiful creature in the world. (*Suddenly looks into house—runs to steps.*) By Jove, she just crossed the hall!

MATT. (*Startled*) Who?

CECIL. My soul's delight—the one creature who is dearer to me than all else—the woman of my dreams!

MATT. She's there in that house?

CECIL. Yes, she works for old Ricks.

MATT. What's her name?

CECIL. (*Goes back c.—sighs*) Goldie Glake!

(MATT shows that he is hit, but restrains himself.)

MATT. (*After pause*) Does she know that you care for her?

CECIL. Of course she knows it. She has pledged herself to me. I've held her in my arms and I've kissed her and she's mine—all mine!

MATT. (*Springs at him*) You'll eat that lie, damn you! (*Seizes CECIL by throat, shakes him.*)

CECIL. (*Terrified*) Oh, I say!

MATT. Say that you've lied!

CECIL. But I haven't, you know. I love her and she loves me. We are to be married to-morrow, if

we can arrange it. (*Takes letter from pocket.*) See, I'll prove it to you. Here's a letter I got from her this morning! (*CECIL reads*) "With eternal and undying devotion. Your little sweetheart, Goldie Glake." (*Indicates signature.*) See there!

MATT. (*Without looking at signature*) You damned whelp! (*Throws CECIL from him, rushes up to L.U. and exits gate to L. After MATT exits, CECIL sits up and looks around dazed.*)

CECIL. (*Rubs himself*) By Jove—rough party!

(*ELLEN enters from house to porch. Stops on seeing CECIL.*)

ELLEN. (*Astonished*) Cecil! (*Runs down to R.C.*)

CECIL. (*Rises, rushes to her*) Goldie!

CECIL. (*Embraces her*) My Goldie, at last!

ELLEN. What in the world were you sitting there for?

CECIL. I was put there.

ELLEN. Put there? By whom?

CECIL. A wild, ferocious, crazy man by the name of Matt Peasley!

ELLEN. You mean Captain Matt Peasley?

CECIL. That's the chap. I told him that I loved you and that you loved me, and he seized me by the throat and threw me to the ground!

ELLEN. Well, of all things!

CECIL. He called me a liar when I said you loved me. I'm not a liar, am I, Goldie? You do love me, don't you?

ELLEN. Of course I do, Cecil!

CECIL. (*Folds her in his arms.*) Goldie! (*Holding her close.*) And you'll marry me?

ELLEN. I told you I would long ago. But your father——

CECIL. Oh, fiddlesticks for father! He's in New

York and we're out here. And I know he'll forgive us the moment he knows we are married.

ELLEN. But it will take money, Cecil, and——

CECIL. Oh, the money is all right. I am to do something for Miss Florence and she is going to give me a check for five hundred dollars in the morning. That will pay our immediate expenses and take us to New York. Then the rest will be easy.

ELLEN. When can we be married? (*Goes L.*)

CECIL. (*Goes L.*) To-morrow, the first thing. You can give old Ricks the sack to-night.

ELLEN. All right. But I shall hate to leave him. He has been very good to me.

CECIL. But he hasn't been very good to me. Whenever I think of him I shall always smell the *Sweet Clover*.

ELLEN. That ought to be a pleasant memory.

CECIL. I'm glad you think so—I don't! (*Close to her.*) Will you marry me to-morrow?

ELLEN. (*Softly*) Yes, Cecil!

(CAPPY enters to porch, followed by SKINNER.)

CECIL. (*Folds ELLEN in his arms*) My darling!

CAPPY. (*On porch. Clears throat*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h!

(ELLEN and CECIL separate in alarm.)

CAPPY. (*Yells*) By the holy pink-toed Prophet!

CECIL. (*Groans*) Oh, Lord!

CAPPY. (*Points to CECIL. Yells*) What d'ye call that, Skinner? What d'ye call that?

SKINNER. Well, from a distance I should say it was Cecil Pericles!

CAPPY. He was hugging that girl, wasn't he?

SKINNER. I'm afraid he was!

CAPPY. (*Comes down to stage*) All right! I'm afraid Cecil Pericles and I are going to have an exciting half hour. (*Looks around.*) But business before pleasure. Where's that scoundrel Peasley?

SKINNER. (*Comes down*) I don't see him.

CAPPY. (*To CECIL*) Have you seen him?

CECIL. He was here a moment ago, but he's gone.

CAPPY. Which way did he go?

CECIL. (*Points L.U.*) That way.

CAPPY. Go and get him, Skinner. He hasn't gone far—not with fifty thousand waiting for him!

(*SKINNER goes up L.U. and looks over wall.*)

SKINNER. (*Points L. back*) There he is—he's standing on the bluff.

CAPPY. He's at home, then!

CECIL. You'd best be careful with him, Mr. Skinner. He's crazy—just crazy!

CAPPY. Yes, he's crazy—as a fox! Get him, Skinner! (*SKINNER exits L.U. to L. CAPPY faces CECIL, threateningly.*) Now, you spindle-shanked, knock-kneed, adle-pated polywog, what d'ye mean by coming here and spoiling my scenery?

CECIL. I had to come, Mr. Ricks—really I had to!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Had to? Somebody took you by the neck and dragged you here, I suppose? And I suppose you "had to" get fresh with my secretary?

CECIL. Yes, sir, I did, sir!

CAPPY. What?

CECIL. I love her and I'm going to marry her! And you have to hug them when you're going to marry them, you know!

CAPPY. You're going to marry her!

CECIL. (*Romantically*) Yes, she's my soul-mate, and I'm going to marry her!

CAPPY. Why, you impudent puppy, I thought you were in training to marry my daughter?

CECIL. (*Defiantly*) I won't marry your daughter!

CAPPY. (*Screams*) You won't?

CECIL. No, I won't! I don't love her and I won't!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) You mean to tell me you won't marry my daughter?

CECIL. I do!

CAPPY. (*Quietly*) Thank God! I was afraid I was going to have some ring-tailed baboons for grandchildren! (*Turns to ELLEN.*) Miss Murray, do you want to marry this vacuum with a hundred thousand dollar education and a ten cent brain?

ELLEN. (*Pleadingly*) I love him, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Shakes head*) And they want to run the government! (*To both*) Where did you two meet?

CECIL. In New York. I loved her the very first time I laid eyes on her.

CAPPY. Where was that?

CECIL. With the "Rose Maid."

CAPPY. Who's she?

CECIL. It isn't a she—it's a musical comedy!

CAPPY. A show?

ELLEN. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. (*Indicates ELLEN*) Is this the girl your father has been having hysterics about?

CECIL. Yes, she is—she is Goldie!

CAPPY. Goldie?

CECIL. Goldie Glake—that's her stage name—the name I love!

CAPPY. Well, I'll be flabbergasted! "Goldie Glake!" Sounds like a patent medicine. (*Turns to ELLEN.*) So I've been harboring a good-for-nothing chorus-girl in my office!

CECIL. (*Protesting*) Oh, I say now——

ELLEN. I have been a chorus girl, Mr. Ricks, and I'm not ashamed of it! There are plenty of good, honest girls in the chorus and they have to suffer for the misdeeds of their weaker sisters who fall by the wayside. But I found it as easy to be decent in the chorus as in an office, and I was a whole lot freer and happier in the theatre. You may sneer at me if you wish, Mr. Ricks, but I'm square and I'm going to stand by the man I love! (*Goes to CECIL.*)

CAPPY. (*After a pause. Shakes head*) It takes a darn fool to be lucky!

(*SKINNER enters L.U., followed by MATT. They come down.*)

CAPPY. (*Turning to MATT*) Peasley, those papers are all ready for your signature in there. You'll find everything straight. Skinner's a notary.

MATT. (*Crosses to steps*) All right.

CAPPY. (*To SKINNER*) Skinner, take the Red Diamond's draft for a hundred thousand and give Peasley our check for fifty thousand.

SKINNER. (*Crosses to steps*) Yes, sir!

MATT. (*On porch*) You've signed, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. Yes, I've signed. I'll be in in a minute.

(*MATT and SKINNER exit into house.*)

CAPPY. (*Turning to ELLEN*) Miss Murray, go in and witness those signatures. I want to have a chat with this Romeo of yours.

ELLEN. (*Goes to porch.*) Yes, Mr. Ricks. (*Exits into house.*)

CAPPY. (*Turns to CECIL*) Now, Mr. Cecil Pericles, what's your father going to say to all this?

CECIL. I don't care what he says. I love Goldie and I'm going to marry her!

CAPPY. (*Imitates him*) "I love Goldie and I'm

going to marry her!" (*Yells*) Is that the only song you know? Well, he'll probably cut you off without a nickel. Then what will you do?

CECIL. What would any man'do?

CAPPY. (*Goes to him*) Well, a man would go out and get a job! But what are you going to do?

CECIL. I'll get a job too.

CAPPY. Well, I suppose if you studied real hard you might learn to mix soda water in eight or ten years.

CECIL. I don't want to learn to mix soda water! I'll get a real job. I'm not afraid of work!

CAPPY. Not in the dark, where you can't recognize it, maybe! However, I'll give you a chance. You stick to the *Sweet Clover* another six months and I'll put you on a decent ship.

CECIL. No decent ship would take me after six months on the *Sweet Clover*. No, thank you, Mr. Ricks—I'm done with the sea. I was never cut out for a sailor.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Well, you're not done with the sea! Your father sent you to me to learn the shipping business, and you're going to learn it, d'ye hear? You can't leave the *Sweet Clover*—you're broke—and I'll notify Captain Olson to hang on to your clothes till the cows come home!

CECIL. Well, Captain Olson won't do it!

CAPPY. He won't, eh? Well, we'll see about that!

CECIL. Captain Olson likes me and he hasn't got as much use for you as I have—and I haven't any!

CAPPY. What are you talking about?

CECIL. (*Warming up*) He told me that you were an old land-pirate and a skinflint. He said you could lie faster than a horse could trot!

CAPPY. (*Knocked breathless*) He said that?

CECIL. He said you promised to give him another ship and you never did it because you had it in for

him. And he said he was going to leave you the moment he got another job!

CAPPY. (*Dangerously quiet*) Oh, he did, did he? He's going to quit me, is he? Well, we'll see about that. I've had trouble with that flat-footed, wooden-headed Swede before! (*Suddenly yells*) He won't get a chance to quit! I'll shoot him out of the Blue Star service like a skyrocket! I'll have the crew chuck him overboard and throw his filthy clothes after him!

CECIL. (*Eagerly*) Are you really going to discharge him?

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Discharge him! If you see flags at half-mast along the water front to-morrow you'll know what's happened to Olson!

CECIL. (*Fervently*) Thank you, Mr. Ricks, I'm so glad! (*Runs up to gate L.U.*)

CAPPY. (*Astounded*) Glad! What in thunder have you got to be glad about?

CECIL. (*At L.U.*) I never like to take money unless I earn it! (*Runs out gate L.U.*)

CAPPY. (*Stares after him in astonishment*) Well, I'll be lambasted!

(SKINNER dashes in from house excitedly.)

SKINNER. (*Wildly as he descends steps*) Mr. Ricks! Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Jumps, turns*) You gone crazy, too?

SKINNER. (*Breathlessly*) A phone—it just came from the Marine Brokers, Roberts and Roberts!

CAPPY. What do they want?

SKINNER. They represent the great Lakes Navigation Company. They're on the market for the *Lion* and the *Unicorn*!

CAPPY. The ships we just sold to the Red Diamond?

SKINNER. Yes. They said they phoned here about it last night.

CAPPY. Who took the message?

SKINNER. They didn't know.

CAPPY. Did they state their offer?

SKINNER. (*Gulping*) Three hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars on each ship—six hundred and fifty thousand for the two!

CAPPY. (*Jumps*) Jumping Jehosophat! (*Frantically*) Skinner, Skinner—is—has Peasley put his name to those papers yet?

SKINNER. (*Despairingly*) Yes, we sealed them just as the phone rang!

CAPPY. And the Red Diamond got us—can hold us to Kingdom Come!

SKINNER. (*Wails*) Yes!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Think of something, you damn fool! What do I pay you ten thousand dollars a year for? Think, you idiot, think!

SKINNER. There's just one chance!

CAPPY. Yes, yes—what is it?

SKINNER. Peasley doesn't know of the Great Lake's offer. You might slip him an extra fifty thousand to tear up those agreements.

CAPPY. You mean bribe him to double-cross the Red Diamond?

SKINNER. That's it!

CAPPY. (*Slaps SKINNER on shoulder*) Good boy, Skinner—best general manager in the shipping game! Great head, think like blazes! Peasley's a broker, and all brokers are crooks—couldn't stay in the game if they weren't. (*Looks off R.*) Look out, here he is!

(MATT enters from house. Comes down and lays brief bag on table. Opens bag.)

CAPPY. (*Suavely*) Well, Captain, all set, eh?

MATT. (*Places papers in case*) All set. (*Locks case.*)

CAPPY. (*Genially*) First big sale?

MATT. First—as a broker.

CAPPY. Must feel pretty good to have fifty thousand dollars all at once. Takes a long time to save that as a captain.

MATT. Oh, about a hundred years—on a salary.

CAPPY. That's right! (*Takes out cigar. Holds it out.*) Have a cigar?

MATT. Sure—don't mind. (*Bites cigar.*)

CAPPY. What do you figure the Red Diamond intends to do with those ships?

MATT. (*Looks at him keenly*) Why, I'm not quite sure. But I think they are going to use them to haul pee-wits' eggs from New Zealand.

CAPPY. (*Tartly*) Now, don't get funny with me, young man! I can throw a lot of business your way. (*Clears throat.*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h-h! (*Close to MATT—confidentially*) Now, Matt, you've got the real stuff in you—going to be a rich man some day.

MATT. I'm going to try to be.

CAPPY. Well, can't start in too soon! (*Clears throat.*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! How would you like to pick up an extra fifty thousand right now?

MATT. Suits me down to the ground.

CAPPY. (*Sidling up to MATT*) Well, here's the idea. Skinner got a phone a few minutes ago from a big milling company up north. They've got a lot of lumber to cargo and they've given us the contract. The lumber has got to be shipped in big lots and we haven't any boats big enough except those we just sold you. So we'd kind of like to have 'em back. (*Looks keenly at MATT.*) Get the idea?

MATT. Yes.

CAPPY. Yes, I thought you would. (*Clears throat.*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! Now, nobody but

we three know that those Red Diamond agreements have been signed. So, if you'll just give 'em back to us and let us tear 'em up, we'll slip you a check for fifty thousand and forget it. Nobody will be the wiser. See?

MATT. You mean, I take fifty thousand to knife the Red Diamond?

CAPPY. (*Delighted*) Yes, that's the idea! (*Slaps MATT on back.*) Quick brain, Matt!

MATT. Why, you infernal old scoundrel!

CAPPY. (*Staggered*) Eh! What?

MATT. You dare to make such a proposition to me—you old scalawag? For two pennies I'd pitch you and your precious general manager over the bluff there into the ocean!

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Seventy-five thousand!

MATT. No, not for a million! Who do you think you're dealing with? You rotten crook!

CAPPY. (*Screams*) All right, I'll settle your hash! I'll tell the Red Diamond people that you made the proposition to *me*, and Skinner will back me up! I'll put you out of business, my fine cock-o'-the-walk!

MATT. I suppose you think the Red Diamond people will believe you?

CAPPY. Of course they'll believe me. They'll take the word of the President of the Blue Star against that of a penny-ante broker, any time!

MATT. (*Close to CAPPY*) Mr. Ricks, it's the luckiest thing in the world for you I'm not the agent of the Red Diamond in this. If I were, I'd forget your years and tear you apart!

CAPPY. (*Astounded*) You're not the agent of the Red Diamond?

MATT. No!

CAPPY. Then who in thunderation are you?

MATT. I'm the President of the Red Diamond!

CAPPY. What? (*Laughs hysterically.*) Ha! Ha!

Ha! (*Turns to SKINNER.*) Skinner, do you hear that, Skinner? That big, overgrown, dull-witted deckhand has the nerve to stand there and tell me that he is the President of the Red Diamond!

SKINNER. Ridiculous!

MATT. Well, I can prove it in a jiffy! My partner and I own every asset the Red Diamond possesses!

CAPPY. If you're connected with the Red Diamond, what d'ye mean by collecting commission from me for the sale of those ships?

MATT. I'm a broker too, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. You mean to tell me you took fifty thousand dollars from me for selling those ships to yourself?

MATT. I do!

CAPPY. Why, you infernal road-agent! (*Shakes fist in MATT's face. Screams*) But I'll fix you, Mr. Matt Peasley. I'll clean you out! You won't be able to meet those payments promptly, and I won't give you an inch of leeway—understand—not an inch!

MATT. (*Cheerfully*) I won't need it, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. Oh, yes, you will! You've only got eighty thousand dollars surplus and you won't be able to find trade for those ships to save your life!

MATT. I won't have to find trade for 'em. I'm going right down and sell 'em now!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Sell' em! To whom?

MATT. To the Great Lakes Navigation Company!

(CAPPY looks at MATT, dazed for a moment, then staggers back against SKINNER.)

CAPPY. (*Weakly*) Fan me, Skinner! (*Jumps up—yells*) Why, you long-eared misfit, how did you find out about that?

MATT. (*Grins*) The Red Diamond never sleeps,

Mr. Ricks—a little bird told me early in the morning!

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Why, you knave, you cheat, you swindler! Flim-flam me out of those ships and charge me fifty thousand dollars for robbing me! (*Yells, close to MATT*) I've got a few things left—why don't you take 'em?

MATT. I intend to, if I get a chance!

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) You hear that, Skinner—you hear that! (*Close to MATT*) Say, young fellow, who d'ye think I am?

MATT. I think you're Santa Claus—(*Holds up brief-case*)—and this is Christmas-time for me! (*Crosses to gate L.U.*) Good day, gentlemen!

CAPPY. (*Screams after him*) Where the devil did you get the money to go into the shipping business?

MATT. (*At gate L.U.*) You'll have to ask my partner!

CAPPY. Who's your partner?

MATT. Goldie Glake! (*Exits L.U. to L.*)

(*ELLEN enters from house to porch.*)

CAPPY. (*Flabbergasted*) Did you hear that name, Skinner—did you hear it?

SKINNER. Yes, Mr. Ricks!

ELLEN. (*Descending to stage*) Oh, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Sees ELLEN—screams*) There she is now! Miss Murray, you're fired!

(*LUCY and FLORRY enter from house to porch.*)

LUCY. (*Comes to top of steps*) Alden! Where is Captain Peasley?

CAPPY. I don't know—but I know where he ought to be!

FLORRY. (*Comes down*) Why are you so hard

on Captain Peasley, Father? Why don't you give him a chance?

CAPPY. Chance! He's got about as much chance with me as a snowball would have chasing an asbestos cat through H——!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: CAPPY RICKS'S office, California Street, San Francisco. Set same as Act I.

Action takes place one week later than events of Act II, one o'clock in the afternoon.

Stage empty at rise. Immediately after rise, SKINNER opens door of his office L.I and enters. He has letter-file in his hand and he goes to filing cabinet L. against wall, opens drawer and places file in it. As he does so, voice of CAPPY RICKS is heard from off R.U.

CAPPY. (*Yells off R.U.*) I don't care a continental who called! Don't bother me—get out! (*Enters R.U. briskly, removes and hangs up hat. Speaks as SKINNER turns.*) Hello, Skinner!

SKINNER. Good afternoon, Mr. Ricks. (*Reprovingly*) You're a trifle late, sir!

CAPPY. (*Snaps*) Well, what if I am?

SKINNER. It is after two and you 'phoned Mr. Graham to see you here at one-thirty.

CAPPY. *He* was here at one-thirty, I suppose?

SKINNER. On the minute. But——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) But I wasn't, eh? (*Shakes finger at SKINNER.*) Let me remind you, Mr. Efficiency Skinner, I haven't been late to this office a half-dozen times in twenty-five years. I've earned a few lapses, and from now on I get here whenever I doggone please. And if people don't want to wait for me, they can go eat grass!

SKINNER. (*Protesting*) But, Mr. Ricks——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) You go eat grass, too!

SKINNER. Yes, sir! (*Crosses to R., gets hat and goes to R.U. CAPPY watches him in amazement.*)

CAPPY. (*As SKINNER reaches door*) Skinner! (*SKINNER stops at door.*) Where are you going?

SKINNER. To find the grass!

CAPPY. (*Solemnly, after pause*) Skinner—hang up your hat! (*SKINNER does so. CAPPY beckons to him.*) Come here! (*SKINNER comes to him. Solemnly*) Skinner, that was awful comedy, but it's the first you've sprung on me since I've known you—and I'm going to reward you for it. (*Rubs chin.*) I pay you a salary of ten thousand dollars a year, don't I?

SKINNER. (*Frightened at his manner*) Yes, sir.

CAPPY. You get ten per cent on all shipping you drum up yourself?

SKINNER. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. Save any money?

SKINNER. About seventy-five thousand dollars, sir.

CAPPY. Going to be married soon, I believe?

SKINNER. Next month, I hope, sir.

CAPPY. (*Clears throat*) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! (*Decisively*) Skinner, there ought to be a great field for a man with your comic ability in the movies!

SKINNER. (*Terrified*) Oh, Mr. Ricks—I—hope—I hope I haven't gone too far, sir!

CAPPY. (*Slowly*) Not at all, Skinner! Not at all! But you've shown me a quality I never suspected you of having, Skinner—a sense of humor—greatest quality in the world! Might as well get all the fun we can out of life, for when we die it's all over and nobody gives a whoop. (*Shakes head seriously.*) But you've got me worried, Skinner. The movie people are just hungry for talent and are paying real money for it. I don't want to lose my gen-

eral manager. (*Abruptly*) Think you could use a hundred shares of Blue Star stock, Skinner?

SKINNER. (*Gasps*) Why, Mr. Ricks——

CAPPY. Good stock, Skinner, sixteen hundred dollars a share—twelve per cent!

SKINNER. (*Chattering*) But, Mr. Ricks—I couldn't handle it for cash, and——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Who the devil said anything about cash? I'm making you a present of it, you all-fired, copper-riveted idiot!

SKINNER. (*Nearly faints*) Mr. Ricks——

CAPPY. (*Breaks in*) You've earned it, haven't you—drilled away here for twenty-five years, and never asked for a raise once. Besides, you're going to get married, and wives cost money. And I don't suppose it will be long before you have a whole houseful of kids! (*Suddenly points at SKINNER—yells*) You intend to, don't you!

SKINNER. (*Flabbergasted*) I'll do my best, sir!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Well, if you don't, I'll fire you! And with a wife and a houseful of children you'll need every nickel you can get your fingers on. I've only got one child and she's put me on the toboggan for the poorhouse!

SKINNER. I—I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Ricks—you've——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Never mind the thanks!

SKINNER. But—I——

CAPPY. (*Yells*) That'll do—not another peep out of you, sir—not another peep! I can afford to give away a few shares of stock to-day, Skinner—won a great victory at the Exchange this morning. Made that big walloper, Matt Peasley, eat dirt!

SKINNER. (*Delightedly*) You did?

CAPPY. (*Front of desk*) You just bet your bottom dollar I did! Had him crawling on all fours before I got through with him!

SKINNER. (*Breathlessly*) How did you do it, sir?

CAPPY. Well, we met there this morning, and I suggested that as he had sold those two ships of ours, the *Lion* and the *Unicorn*, to the Great Lakes Navigation Company and cleaned up a hundred and fifty thousand on the deal, he might settle with us for cash.

SKINNER. That was fair. What did he say?

CAPPY. That he was going to stick to the fifty thousand dollars a month schedule as he could get eight per cent on every dollar he had, and he was only paying us six.

SKINNER. (*Gasps*) Why, the scoundrel!

CAPPY. Isn't he? Regular young Shylock! I tell you that made me mad, Skinner, and I just lit into him! I called him a thief, a robber, a highwayman, right there in front of all the others!

SKINNER. What did he say to that?

CAPPY. Threatened to pull my nose!

SKINNER. (*Shocked*) Oh, he wouldn't have done that!

CAPPY. He was going to, just the same!

SKINNER. I don't think he would have gone that far!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Don't you suppose I know when a man is going to pull my nose? (*Stretches out arm, clutches fingers.*) When a man comes at you like that, he isn't going to kiss you, is he?

SKINNER. Why, the insolent ruffian!

CAPPY. But I fixed him—didn't have a word to say when I got through with him!

SKINNER. What did you do?

CAPPY. I got behind the cigar counter where the glass case was between us, and I called him everything I could think of. Outdid myself, Skinner—it was a star performance. Why, I dug up names I hadn't thought of in thirty years—just gathered up

the whole vocabulary of vituperation and poured it over his head like water out of a bucket. He was overwhelmed, swamped, speechless, and after I ran out of breath he just stood and looked at me a moment, then turned on his heel and went out without saying a word! (*Phone on desk rings. CAPPY motions toward phone.*) Answer it, Skinner! (*Mops brow.*)

SKINNER. (*Goes to phone, takes it up—through phone*) Hello? Yes, Blue Star. Mr. Ricks? Sure, right here! Hold the wire! (*Holds out phone to CAPPY.*) Somebody for you, sir.

CAPPY. (*Through phone*) Hello? Yes! (*Yells*) What? (*CAPPY yells through phone*) Am I what? (*Pauses, screams*) Oh, go to Halifax! (*Slams receiver on hook, comes down. Indicates phone.*) Know who that was?

SKINNER. The voice was familiar.

CAPPY. It was that infernal jackanapes, Matt Peasley!

SKINNER. (*Crosses to CAPPY*) What did he want?

CAPPY. Wanted to know if I was automatic or had to be wound up!

SKINNER. (*Sympathetically*) That fellow is getting unbearable, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Keenly*) You don't like him, do you, Skinner?

SKINNER. Of course I don't! I think he's an arrogant brute! But if he ever comes in here and tries to stir up trouble with me, I'm prepared for him!

CAPPY. That so? What are you going to do?

SKINNER. I've got a heavy, hardwood axe-handle in my office there, and if he starts anything with me I'll clout him over the head with it!

CAPPY. Great idea. Skinner, great idea! Only one drawback, though!

SKINNER. What is that?

CAPPY. He'd take it away from you before you could use it and ram it down your throat! (*Goes to SKINNER, places hand on his shoulder.*) Skinner, it's always best to look facts in the face, isn't it?

SKINNER. I've always found it so, sir.

CAPPY. (*Crosses to table*) Well, there's one fact we've got to face, and that is that Matt Peasley's made good. I've been watching that boy, Skinner—and he's not only a wide-awake business man, but he's a clean, square fighter. You remember last week out to my place when you put me up to try to bribe him?

SKINNER. Yes.

CAPPY. I didn't like your suggestion and I acted on it only because I wanted to try him out. I thought I wanted him to fall, but when he came clean I was glad enough to hug him.

SKINNER. But that was no test. You couldn't expect him to betray himself!

CAPPY. But he was mad, Skinner—and it was a good, honest mad, that lit him up all over. I've got a hunch that it was a lucky thing for us he was representing only himself. If he had been agent for someone else, we would have both been chasing butterflies in some hospital now.

SKINNER. You seem to have changed your opinion of Captain Peasley, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. (*Snaps*) Not a bit of it! I admire him, but I hate him—hate him just as much as I ever did! And if I ever get a strangle-hold on him, I'll choke him to death! (*Goes up behind desk, sits.*) But I can't get that Goldie Blake business straightened out in my head! That girl was never in partners with Matt Peasley!

SKINNER. Well, she had something to do with the Red Diamond. Her name is cropping up everywhere now.

(LUCY RICKS *enters door R.U. and stands at door.*
SKINNER *bows.*)

SKINNER. (*Bowing*) Good afternoon, Miss Ricks.

LUCY. (*Acknowledges*) Mr. Skinner!

CAPPY. Why, hello, sis! Come right in!

LUCY. (*Venturing in*) I'm not interrupting, am I?

CAPPY. Not at all, not at all. Just chinning with Skinner.

LUCY. Florry hasn't been here yet, has she?

CAPPY. No. Expecting her?

LUCY. We were to meet here and go shopping together.

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) Skinner, look over our contracts for six months ahead. Don't want to leave any more loopholes for the Red Diamond to crawl through!

SKINNER. (*Crosses to L.I.*) All right, sir! (*Exits, closing door.*)

CAPPY. (*Chair R. of desk*) Sit down, Lucy! (*LUCY sits R. of desk.*) Well, what's the good word? Florry feeling better?

LUCY. No, Alden, she's worse, if anything. The poor girl is in a dreadful state!

CAPPY. (*Anxiously*) Got any idea what's the matter with her?

LUCY. (*Seriously*) Yes, Alden, I wrung the whole truth out of her this morning.

CAPPY. (*Leans forward eagerly*) You did! What is it?

LUCY. Alden—that girl is in love!

CAPPY. (*Comes out of his chair*) What? (*Stares at LUCY.*) You're crazy!

LUCY. No, I'm not, Alden!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Who in thunderation is she in love with?

LUCY. Matt Peasley!

CAPPY. (*Shrilly*) Matt Peasley!

LUCY. That's who it is, Alden.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Where the devil did she get a chance to fall in love with Matt Peasley?

LUCY. They've been meeting right along. Why, after she told me, I got our chauffeur, Brookfield, to confess that he drove them all around Golden Gate Park on several occasions!

CAPPY. (*Jumps up*) Did you come in the car?

LUCY. Yes.

CAPPY. Brookfield driving?

LUCY. Yes, he's waiting downstairs.

(CAPPY rushes to R.U. and calls off R.)

CAPPY. Tommy, Tommy, you red-headed product of Billy-goat Hill!

VOICE. (*Off R.U.*) Yes, sir?

CAPPY. Go down and get my chauffeur, Brookfield. Tell him I want to see him immediately!

VOICE. (*Off R.*) All right, sir!

(CAPPY goes back of desk to L. and paces up and down.)

CAPPY. (*Raging*) I can't believe it, Lucy—I can't believe it—there's some mistake somewhere! (*Goes to her. Vehemently*) You can't tell me that my Florry would so far forget herself as to fall in love with a Johnny Jack-tar like Matt Peasley!

LUCY. But, Alden——

CAPPY. Now, don't argue with me—it's out of the question, I tell you. Florry's got too much sense—she's too much like me—head rules her heart all the time. I'm as cold-blooded as a fish—not a particle of sentiment about me—just a machine—and she's like that, too. You said yourself she was like me!

LUCY. And so she is, Alden, but——

CAPPY. (*Breaks in*) Then she's too practical to fall in love out of her class!

LUCY. The Thomaston Peasleys are very fine people, Alden!

CAPPY. I know, I know—but this fellow's a black sheep. If he hadn't been he would have stayed at home like the rest, instead of coming out here and worrying the life out of me! (*Vehemently*) I tell you, it's absolutely and utterly out of the question, Lucy. Florry would never——

(BROOKFIELD *enters door R.U. and stands at door with hat in hand. He is a young fellow about thirty and dressed in chauffeur's uniform.*)

BROOKFIELD. (*At door*) You sent for me, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. Yes, Brookfield. Did you ever drive my daughter and a strange man around Golden Gate Park?

BROOKFIELD. Several times, sir!

CAPPY. What kind of a looking chap was he?

BROOKFIELD. Big, clean-cut fellow, with a square jaw and wavy hair.

CAPPY. (*Quickly*) Did my daughter call him "Matt"?

BROOKFIELD. Only once or twice—but not most of the time.

CAPPY. (*Eagerly*) What did she call him most of the time?

BROOKFIELD. She called him, "Dearie"!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What! (*Shies book at BROOKFIELD.*) Get out, you infernal scoundrel, get out!

(BROOKFIELD *ducks book and scurries out R.U.*)

CAPPY. (*Raging up and down*) This is a fine

"how-do-you-do"—my Florry in love with a wooden-headed dub like Matt Peasley! (*Faces LUCY.*) And the nerve, the effrontery, the unmitigated gall of him, daring to cast his eyes *on one of my family!*

LUCY. But he didn't know she was related to you, Alden!

CAPPY. (*Stops, stares at her*) He didn't?

LUCY. Florry has never revealed her identity to him. Gave him an assumed name.

CAPPY. The devil she did! What name?

LUCY. Goldie Glake!

CAPPY. (*Stands petrified, looking at her. Repeats*) Goldie—— (*Falls against desk, presses hand to heart*) Oh——!

LUCY. (*Rises, alarmed*) Why, Alden, what is it?

CAPPY. (*Waves hand, gasps*) Nothing! Nothing! But you ought to do it gently—with a club! (*Suddenly leaps up.*) Jumping Jehosaphat! (*Rushes to L.I., opens it. Yells off*) Skinner! Skinner! (*Crosses back to c.*) Lucy, you're a messenger of joy!

(SKINNER *rushes in* L.I.)

SKINNER. (*Excitedly*) What is it, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. (*Turns to SKINNER*) Skinner, if there was a prize offered for the finest pair of gilt-edged durned fools in the world—know where they'd find 'em?

SKINNER. Where?

CAPPY. Right here in the Blue Star office!

SKINNER. (*Looks around*) Who——

CAPPY. You and I, Skinner, you and I! We've had that fresh Matt Peasley right under our thumbs for a week and I've just realized it!

SKINNER. How do you mean, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. Can't explain now—talk it over later.

But I've found out how Peasley learned that the Great Lakes Navigation Company was after the *Lion* and the *Unicorn*!

SKINNER. How?

CAPPY. The phone message from them that came to my house the night before was received by Peasley's partner and she tipped him off!

SKINNER. But she wasn't—

CAPPY. Yes, she was! (*Motions L.I.*) Call up my lawyer, Gordon—tell him I want to see him right away! (*SKINNER crosses to door L.I., as SKINNER exits*) Be on the job the minute I call you!

SKINNER. Yes, sir. (*Exits L.I., closing door.*)

(*CAPPY rushes to LUCY, seizes her and dances around with her.*)

CAPPY. (*Wildly*) Hooray, Lucy—I feel sixteen again!

LUCY. (*Pushes him away*) Alden Ricks, have you gone crazy?

CAPPY. (*Happily*) Yes, I'm crazy—crazy with the joy of victory! (*Seizes hand.*) Lucy, before you go, you get a check from Skinner for five hundred dollars. You need a couple of new dresses!

LUCY. What in the world is the matter with you, Alden?

CAPPY. (*Happily*) You'll know soon enough! I'm going to send for that scoundrel, Matt Peasley, and we're going to have the finest little shindig that's ever been pulled off in this office!

LUCY. But I've already seen Captain Peasley, Alden!

CAPPY. (*Stares at her*) You have?

LUCY. Yes.

CAPPY. Where?

LUCY. I came directly here from his office just now.

CAPPY. What in thunder were you doing in his office?

LUCY. (*Half pleadingly*) I just had to go, really I did! When Florry told me what was troubling her this morning, she cried till she almost broke my heart. You have no idea how that girl cares, Alden.

CAPPY. (*Crosses to her—shrilly*) What did you do? Get down on your knees and beg Peasley to marry the daughter of Alden P. Ricks?

LUCY. (*Indignantly*) Of course not—the idea! He doesn't even know now that she's your daughter. If I had told him, Florry would have never forgiven me!

CAPPY. Then what did you go there for?

LUCY. He had refused to see Florry and she didn't know what had come between them. So I made up my mind to find out.

CAPPY. What was it?

LUCY. He said that everything was over between Miss Glake and him, because he had found out that she had deceived him—had been receiving the attentions of another man.

CAPPY. Did he say what man?

LUCY. Yes—Cecil Bernard!

CAPPY. (*Thunderstruck*) What! (*Pause—reflects*) Miss Glake—Cecil! (*Light suddenly dawns upon him, CAPPY yells*) Jumping Jehosaphat! (*Falls against desk, roars with laughter.*) Ha, ha, ha! (*Slaps knee.*)

LUCY. (*Indignantly*) I don't see anything funny about it!

CAPPY. (*Laughing*) Well, I do! Ha, ha, ha!

LUCY. Alden Ricks, what's come over you?

CAPPY. (*Rising, drying his eyes*) Excuse me, Lucy, but you're making life worth living to-day! Somebody has put one over on that bumptious Mr. Peasley at last and given him something to worry about. (*Goes to her.*) I'm sorry for Florry, Lucy—

but it is just as well as it is. I'd only have to break up her little romance, anyway, before it went too far. Why, if that conceited ass Peasley found out that the daughter of Alden P. Ricks was in love with him—he'd just swell up and walk all over me.

LUCY. I don't think so, Alden. He's really very modest!

CAPPY. (*Dryly*) Oh, yes—he's as modest as an insurance agent!

LUCY. (*Pleadingly*) And Florry really and truly loves him, Alden. She has just given her whole self to that young man—and her heart is just breaking for him!

CAPPY. What nonsense—she'll get over it!

LUCY. I'm afraid not, Alden. She's like you, you know. When she sets her heart on a thing, she can never be happy till she gets it. And she has set her heart on Matt Peasley.

CAPPY. Foolishness, Lucy—foolishness! She's young—some other chap will come along and she'll forget Peasley ever lived! A marriage between them is absolutely out of the question. (*Faces Lucy, gloatingly*) But I love Florry more than ever now. She's given me a chance to hand Peasley a jolt that'll make him see stars. (*Rubs hand.*) Then, after I hand him the first jolt—I'll finish the job by telling him she's my daughter!

LUCY. Yes, that would settle Florry's poor little romance forever!

CAPPY. How do you mean?

LUCY. He never would see her again if he knew she was related to you.

CAPPY. Oh, is that so? He'd just about break his neck getting in on the ground floor with the heiress to the Ricks' millions!

LUCY. You're mistaken, Alden! He said he'd never marry anyone you had a claim on.

CAPPY. What? How did he come to say that?

LUCY. Well, when I saw he was so determined to cancel the affair, I tried to interest him in another way. I hinted that you might adopt Goldie Glake and make her your heiress.

CAPPY. (*Laughs*) Ha, ha! Bet he lifted his ears at that!

LUCY. I thought perhaps the advantages of marrying a share of the Ricks' fortune might appeal to him—and lay the foundation for a reconciliation.

CAPPY. Lucy, you are an old meddler! Now I'll have to kill that chap to get rid of him!

LUCY. No, you won't, Alden!

CAPPY. You mean to say he didn't jump at the bait?

LUCY. He did not!

CAPPY. What did he do?

LUCY. He just seemed to lift right out of his chair. Gracious, I had no idea he was so tall! He frightened me dreadfully, for his eyes were just blazing!

CAPPY. (*Breathlessly*) What did he say?

LUCY. He said: "Tell old Ricks I want to share his money, all right—every nickel I can squeeze out of him in business. But I wouldn't marry his daughter or anybody he had a claim on if she were encrusted with diamonds and mounted in platinum! I'm rather particular whom I marry!"

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Did that infernal blackguard say that?

LUCY. Those were his exact words! Then he politely excused himself and showed me the door with the air of a prince.

CAPPY. The reprobate!

LUCY. So you see, all you have to do is to tell him that Florry is your daughter, and you're rid of him forever!

CAPPY. (*Raging*) Why, the conceited, egotisti-

cal, swaggering, inflated young turkey! My blood not good enough for him, eh?

LUCY. He didn't say that, Alden!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Well, that's what he meant! (*Raging up and down.*) Any time the worst Ricks isn't better than the best Peasley that ever lived, I'll go jump in the bay! Scorn my daughter, will he—my little Florry, who is good enough to marry an Emperor! (*Crosses to door L.I.*) Well, we'll see about that! (*Opens door, yells off L.*) Skinner, call up that flat-head, Matt Peasley, and tell him that Alden Ricks wants to see him here at once! Say it's business!

SKINNER. (*Off L.*) Very well, sir!

(CAPPY starts to close door, then suddenly jerks it open.)

CAPPY. (*Yells off L.*) And Skinner!

SKINNER. (*Off*) Yes, sir!

CAPPY. Have your axe-handle where you can get it quick!

SKINNER. (*Off L.*) All right, sir!

(CAPPY closes door and returns c.)

CAPPY. (*Pacing*) I'll show that big, overgrown Yankee flapdoodle that, while he might catch Alden P. Ricks napping in a business deal now and then, he can't monkey with his family and get away with it! I've got him by the scruff of the neck right this minute, and if he doesn't come through clean with Florry, I'll snap his head off his shoulders! I'll show him whether Alden Ricks's daughter's good enough for a Peasley or not!

(FLORRY enters R.U., stops in doorway.)

FLORRY. Hello, Daddy!

CAPPY. (*Stops, looks her over*) How do you do—Miss Goldie Glake!

FLORRY. (*Comes down to LUCY*) Oh, Auntie, I just knew you couldn't keep anything from him!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Now, don't blame your aunt! I would have found it out sooner or later, anyway—and the sooner the better! (*To LUCY*) Lucy, go in and talk to Skinner—get that check from him! (*LUCY goes to door L.I.—as she goes*) Ask him about the future Mrs. Skinner and all the little Skinners-to-be. (*As she reaches door*) I'm going to have a pleasant little interview with this precious offspring of mine!

LUCY. (*At door*) Don't be severe, Alden!

CAPPY. Oh, I won't spank her! (*Motions her off.*) Run along! (*LUCY exits door L.I., closing door. CAPPY eyes FLORRY, thrusts thumbs in vest.*) Well—cut loose from the Red Diamond, eh?

FLORRY. (*Gasps*) Whv, I didn't tell Aunt Lucy anything about the Red Diamond!

CAPPY. Of course you didn't! That was your little dark secret!

FLORRY. (*Astounded*) Then, how did you—

CAPPY. (*Breaks in*) You don't suppose father's going to be a blind old flub-dub all the time, do you?

FLORRY. (*Goes to him*) Now, don't be angry, Daddy dear! It really was wonderful fun!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Fun! Fun! About three hundred thousand dollars' worth of fun for me! That's what it has cost me to date! The next time you want to have fun with your father, buy a box and put a spring in it. Then I'll sit on the spring and pop up, so you can have a good laugh! You'll get just as much fun out of it and it won't cost me anything.

FLORRY. (*Snuggles up to him*) Now, Popsy!

CAPPY. (*Pushes her away, yells*) "Now, Popsy!"

That bunk isn't going to get you anything this time, young lady! The idea of your intercepting that message from the Great Lakes people about the *Lion* and the *Unicron*, and tipping it off to Peasley!

FLORRY. Well, he was my partner, you see, and—

CAPPY. (*Sarcastically*) Yes—your partner!

FLORRY. And I just had to get the rest of that fifty thousand for the African Pygmies Uplift Society, you know!

CAPPY. Of course, the African pygmies were more important than your father.

FLORRY. But you've got plenty of everything, Daddy—while they have to run around naked!

CAPPY. Well, if I have you with me much longer, I'll run around naked! (*Suddenly*) Now what's all this about you and Peasley?

FLORRY. (*Gasps*) Did Aunt Lucy tell you that, too?

CAPPY. Oh, yes, yes. Aunt Lucy has spilled all the beans—not one left on the plate! Now out with it!

FLORRY. (*Tugging at button on his coat*) Well, you see, Daddy—

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Now, don't stall—come clean!

FLORRY. Well, after we went into business together we saw each other ever so often—and—and— (*Lays cheek against his.*) Well, you know, Daddy—

CAPPY. Yes, I know. Big, good-looking roustabout and soft-hearted, romantic girl! Old, old story! All off now, eh?

FLORRY. (*On the verge of tears*) I'm afraid it is—and— (*Suddenly leans against him and sobs.*) Oh, Popsy—I'm so unhappy!

CAPPY. (*Patting her tenderly*) There, there, little kitten-kitty! (*Soothingly*) You just tell your old ponsy all about it!

FLORRY. (*Drying her eyes*) Well, I just knew he cared for me, but he never made any demonstra-

tion of it until that day out at Sea Look—and only when I told him I was going to sell out to him. You see he wouldn't mix sentiment with business.

CAPPY. Oh, cold-blooded young man, eh?

FLORRY. I'm sure he intended to propose the next day, but something must have come up, for when I went down the next morning he refused to see me.

CAPPY. I suppose you went down to his office bright and early to give him a chance to propose!

FLORRY. I didn't get there till nine o'clock.

CAPPY. Well, that wasn't so bad—you might have hung around all night! Hasn't he offered any explanation?

FLORRY. Not a word!

CAPPY. High-handed young chap! Ever occur to you that the fact you gave him an assumed name had something to do with it?

FLORRY. (*Surprised*) How could it?

CAPPY. Oh, it could very easily! Cecil was in love with Goldie Blake. And he was out there that day.

FLORRY. (*Gasps*) Daddy! (*Light dawns upon her.*) Daddy, you don't think that Cecil——

CAPPY. (*Breaks in*) Well, I don't see why not. I know that he and Peasley met that day, for when I and Skinner came out of the house looking for Peasley, Cecil told us where he was.

FLORRY. (*Joyfully*) Oh, Daddy, I see it all now. What a fool I've been! (*Runs up to door R.U.*)

CAPPY. (*Yells at her*) Hey! (*FLORRY stops.*) Where are you going?

FLORRY. I'm going to explain everything to Matt!

CAPPY. You'll do nothing of the kind. The idea, trot over there and snivel over that long-eared jack-ass! I should say not!

FLORRY. But if I don't go to him—he'll never, never come to me!

CAPPY. Well, then let him stay where he is! There are plenty of other men in the world!

FLORRY. But he's the only one I want! (*Comes back to R.C.*)

CAPPY. I can't understand what has come over you, Florry! Why, you used to be so durned particular that I was afraid I was going to have an old maid on my hands.

FLORRY. You needn't have been alarmed. We have one old maid, and that's enough. Aunt Lucy told me if she had her life to live over, she'd marry a street-sweeper rather than face old age alone.

CAPPY. Well, your Aunt Lucy is different—she has foolishly cherished a memory, and now that she's old, that's all she's got. Too bad that her lover had to be torn from her so young. Mighty fine man—first mate of the steamer *Central America*, burned off Cape Hatteras, nearly thirty years ago.

FLORRY. And she has grieved all this time for him.

CAPPY. Yes, she's been pretty lonely—Lucy has. I know something of how she feels—I feel the same way about your mother. But your mother did leave you to me, God bless her! (*After a pause.*) Florry, are you sure way down in your heart that you love this man Peasley?

FLORRY. (*Smuggles to him*) I know I do, Daddy! He's the whole world to me—and I could never be happy without him!

CAPPY. Then, by the eternal, you shall have him! We won't have another lonely heart in the family!

FLORRY. (*Hugs him joyfully*) Oh, Popsy!

CAPPY. I said you should have him—but there's a big "maybe" goes with that!

FLORRY. What "maybe"?

CAPPY. There's a good chance that he won't want you.

FLORRY. But I'm sure he loves me!

CAPPY. Perhaps, but he's a hard-headed customer. And do you know what he said?

FLORRY. What?

CAPPY. He said he wouldn't marry anyone who belonged to me if she were studded with diamonds and set in platinum!

FLORRY. (*Gasps*) He didn't!

CAPPY. Yes, he did!

FLORRY. Who did he say that to?

CAPPY. Never mind. But you can bank that he said it.

FLORRY. But I'm just sure he loves me, Daddy!

CAPPY. He doesn't love Florence Ricks—never saw her. It's Goldie Blake he loves. (*Disgustedly.*) Goldie Blake—that name seems to attract Romeos as molasses does flies! (*FLORRY turns away.*) That's what you get for sailing under false colors!

FLORRY. But if I had told him, he would have never taken me in as a partner.

CAPPY. Probably not! And I would have been three hundred thousand dollars better off!

FLORRY. (*In desperation*) Oh, whatever will we do, Daddy?

CAPPY. "We!" You mean what will I do? Father's always the goat when there's any dirty work to be done!

FLORRY. You must do something right away, Popsy!

CAPPY. There, I knew it! I suppose you want me to get down on my knees to that big duffer and plead with him to marry my daughter?

FLORRY. Well, I'm sure he'll help you to your feet when you're through!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) What?

FLORRY. (*Close to him, snuggles*) Popsy—please!

CAPPY. (*Pushes her away—yells*) "Popsy, please!"

(Screams) I won't do it! You can stay single the rest of your life as far as I am concerned!

FLOTTY. (Turns up R.) Oh, very well! (Goes up to R.U.)

CAPPY. (Yells) Where are you going?

FLOTTY. (Turns at door) If you won't ask him, I will!

CAPPY. You'll do nothing of the kind.

FLOTTY. Yes, I will too!

CAPPY. (Yells) Floppy Ricks, if you go out that door, I'll cut you off without a nickel!

FLOTTY. (Stamps foot) I don't care, I don't want your old money! (Starts to cry.) G-good-b-b-bye forever! (Turns slowly.)

CAPPY. (Mops brow) Oh, Lord! (Pleadingly) Floppy, if you love your old father, please don't go out that door. Think what an awful thing it would be to die with five million and have no one to leave it to!

FLOTTY. (At door) You'll speak to Matt Peasley for me?

CAPPY. (Miserably) I suppose I'll have to!

FLOTTY. (Changes instantly, runs to him) Oh, Popsy—you're so good to me! (Hugs him.)

CAPPY. Yes, that's what's the matter—I've been too doggoned good to you—spoiled you all your life—never refused you a thing!

FLOTTY. Are you sorry?

CAPPY. (Pauses, looks at her, takes her in his arms. With infinite tenderness) No, kitten-kitty, I'm not a darned bit sorry—I've been repaid a thousand per cent for every little thing I ever did for you. Why, one little word of endearment from your lips would repay me for the loss of a million!

FLOTTY. (Snuggles up to him) Dear, dear old Daddy!

CAPPY. As for Matt Peasley—if you want that big sailor, you shall have him! I'll land him for

you if I have to rope and hog-tie him and stand over him with a gun while the parson ties the knot! (*Holds her away from him. Grins.*) And now I'll tell you something, Florry—I'm tickled to death you picked out Peasley, because I like him—a little swelled-headed and sure of himself—but I like him. He's one of our people and he's a man—every inch of him. He was a good sailor and he's proven himself a good business man—headed straight on the road to wealth. But if he didn't have a penny—it wouldn't make any difference—you should have him just the same!

(*CECIL sticks head in door R.U.*)

CECIL. Whoopsie, whoop!

CAPPY. (*Jumps, yells*) Holy smoke—there it is again! (*Looks around.*) Where's Skinner with that axe-handle! (*Down L.C.*)

FLORRY. (*Cordially*) Come right in, Cecil!

(*CECIL ventures in door, watching CAPPY.*)

CECIL. You'll protect me, Miss Florry?

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) Of course I will!

CECIL. Thanks awfully! How do you do, Mr. Rocks!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Rocks!

CECIL. (*Hastily*) Er—er—Ricks—Ricks!

CAPPY. I told that office boy not to let you in if you came around here!

CECIL. Oh, he's busy in the hall.

CAPPY. Playing craps with the colored porter?

CECIL. (*Grins*) Well, some such occupation.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) I'll murder that kid!

FLORRY. Where's Ellen?

CECIL. She stopped to talk to one of the girls in

another office. She didn't know you were here, you know.

FLORRY. Was she pleased with the flowers and the silver set I sent?

CECIL. She was delighted! They were gorgeous—awfully kind of you—ripping, you know.

FLORRY. Well, I sent the flowers. The silver was father's present.

CECIL. (*Astounded*) You don't mean it!

FLORRY. Yes, indeed. He went down with me and picked it out himself.

CECIL. (*Touched*) I say, that's awfully kind of you, Mr. Ricks. All I expected from you was a bomb.

CAPPY. That's what I wanted to send you, but Florry wouldn't have it. Heard from your father about your escapade yet?

CECIL. Oh, he's here, you know!

CAPPY. Here in San Francisco?

CECIL. Yes, arrived this morning. That's what I came up to tell you.

CAPPY. Why didn't the old rascal come up himself?

CECIL. Well, he's a little tired after his trip. But he's coming out to Sea Look this evening.

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) Oh, Cecil, what did he say about your marriage?

CECIL. Well, you see, I wired him the moment we were made one, but I received a message from home saying he had started for out here two days before. So I was quite prepared for him, and when he arrived this morning I sent Goldie right in to see him.

CAPPY. That was a brave thing to do!

FLORRY. (*Excitedly*) What happened?

CECIL. I waited outside about a half-hour—then I opened the door softly and tiptoed in. He was

standing in the middle of the room with Goldie in his arms.

CAPPY. I'll bet he barked when he saw you!

CECIL. He just looked at me and said, "How did she ever fall for a simp like you?"

CAPPY. (*Laughs*) Ha! Ha! Good for old Nick!

(ELLEN runs in door R.U. Stops in surprise on seeing FLORRY, then runs down into her arms.)

FLORRY. Ellen!

ELLEN. Florry!

FLORRY. (*Holds her away and looks at her*) Isn't it just splendid!

CAPPY. I suppose I ought to congratulate you, Mrs. Bernard—(*Looks at CECIL, shakes head*)—but I haven't the heart to do it.

ELLEN. (*Excitedly*) Oh, Florence, who do you think is talking out there in the hall?

FLORRY. Who?

ELLEN. Captain Peasley. I only saw him once and he remembered me and bowed.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Peasley! Say, you kids clear out of here double-quick! I've got to see Peasley alone. He'll be in in a minute!

CECIL. (*Starts for up R.*) Well, Goldie and I must be going away.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) No, you don't! (CECIL stops with a jerk.) I don't want him to see you going out of here! (*Indicates L.U.*) Miss Murray—I mean, Mrs. Bernard—take your cross in life into your old office. You go in and entertain 'em, Florry.

ELLEN. (*Takes CECIL's arm*) Tum on, honey-bunch!

CECIL. Yes, tweetie! (*Places arm about her—they go up to L.U.*) The naughty old man doesn't want my little snookie-ookums in here. But we don't

care—does we?—we're happy just bofe togevvver!
(*They exit L.U., closing door. CAPPY stares after them, dumb with astonishment.*)

CAPPY. (*After their exit, solemnly*) Is that love?

FLORRY. (*Laughs*) They seem to be happy.

CAPPY. (*Stares at her*) I wonder if I was ever such a darn fool as that? (*Turns up c. Looks off R.U., starts and turns to FLORRY.*) Peasley is just outside the door. I can see his shadow on the glass!

FLORRY. (*Starts up R.*) All right!

CAPPY. (*Looking off R., stops her*) Look out! He's opening the door—he'll see you if you go in there! (*Indicates L.I.*) Go into Skinner's office. Those turtle doves can take care of themselves! (*Sits back of desk. FLORRY runs back down L.I.—opens it.*)

FLORRY. (*Turns briefly at door*) Do your best, Daddy!

CAPPY. Or worst! (*Motions her off.*) Scoot!

(*FLORRY exits, closing door. CAPPY leans back in swivel chair and pretends to be deeply engrossed in document. MATT enters R.U., pauses just inside door and stands looking at CAPPY. CAPPY pays no attention to him.*)

MATT. (*After pause*) Ahem! (*CAPPY leans forward to desk, takes pen and writes on document. MATT amused*) Shipping business must be good, Cappy!

CAPPY. (*Jumps, yells*) Don't you call me "Cappy"!

MATT. Well, at that, I think "Pappy" would suit you better.

CAPPY. You young scoundrel, who do you think you're talking to?

MATT. A sinful old man who called me a lot of hard names this morning.

CAPPY. Yes, and I've got a lot more up my sleeve. I haven't exhausted my vocabulary—not by a jugful!

MATT. (*Hastily*) I believe you—I believe you—don't strain yourself! (*Sits on edge of desk.*) Your shadow and general office boy, Mr. Skinner, phoned me you wanted to see me.

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Did you ever try sitting on a chair?

MATT. (*Looks at him*) Eh?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Get off my desk!

MATT. (*As though suddenly comprehending*) Oh, yes, yes! Excuse me! (*Jumps up. Looks at desk.*) Antique, like its owner! (*Faces CAPPY.*) Now what is it, Mr. Alden P. Ricks?

CAPPY. Want to sell the Red Diamond?

MATT. (*Surprised*) Well, I wasn't thinking about it.

CAPPY. Make you a good offer for it.

MATT. (*Slowly*) Well—I'm always open to a good offer for anything. What's your price?

CAPPY. (*Wags head*) Five dollars!

MATT. (*Puzzled*) You don't say! What's the idea?

CAPPY. I offer you five dollars for the Red Diamond Navigation Company. And that's four dollars and ninety-nine cents more than it is worth!

MATT. Oh, is that so!

CAPPY. (*Wags his head in his face*) Yes, that's so!

MATT. (*After pause*) Well, I'll call you. What have you got in the hole?

CAPPY. An ace, young man, a great, big, fat ace!

MATT. Well, turn it over and let's see it!

CAPPY. When you went into the shipping business you took in as a partner a woman who called herself Goldie Blake, didn't you?

MATT. I believe that's her name!

CAPPY. Well, you believe wrong, young fellow! She worked for me here in this office and her name isn't Goldie Glake at all!

MATT. I don't believe it!

CAPPY. Well, I can prove it to your entire satisfaction—and what is more, I can prove it to the satisfaction of any court in the world!

MATT. Well, if it *is* true—what of it?

CAPPY. When you secured your charter for the Red Diamond you took it over under the firm name of Peasley and Glake, didn't you?

MATT. Yes, sir.

CAPPY. (*Triumphantly*) Then your corporation isn't valid—it's a fraud! There's no such person as Glake, so that name on any account renders it void! Consequently there is no such corporation as the Red Diamond!

MATT. (*Cheerfully*) Well, I guess it can be easily fixed up.

CAPPY. No, it can't be fixed up. Before your partner drew out of the firm every contract you signed was signed "Red Diamond Navigation Company, Incorporated." Consequently every agreement that bears that signature is void!

MATT. Well, what are you going to do about it?

CAPPY. (*Yells*) I'm going to sue you, Mr. Wisenheimer Peasley, for the full value of those two ships you stole from me—the *Lion* and the *Unicorn*! (*Shakes fist in MATT's face.*) And I'll win—you understand—I'll win!

MATT. But of course you'll credit me with the hundred thousand I've already paid in?

CAPPY. (*Screams delightedly*) Not a penny of it! I'm going to soak you for the last nickel! And furthermore, I'm going to collect, with interest, every other dollar I've lost through you and your mushroom corporation! (*Shakes fists under MATT's nose.*) I'll clean you, you swaggering upstart, un-

til you won't have the price of a stack of wheats! (*Points at MATT emphatically*) And I'm sure I can send you away for awhile for fraud, too!

MATT. (*Pretends alarm*) Oh, you wouldn't do that, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Triumphantly*) Oh, yes, I will! Nothing would please me better than to spend the week-end up at San Quentin once in a while, just to have the pleasure of seeing you break rocks in a pretty little uniform with stripes all over it. (*MATT stands looking at him silently. CAPPY wags head in MATT's face.*) Haven't got a word to say, have you—scared to death—dumb as an oyster—getting ready to crawl and eat dirt! (*Yells*) Well, it won't do you any good, Mr. Peasley—I've got your nose down in the gravel and I'm going to rub it in till the skin is off!

MATT. (*Turning up R.*) Well, if that's all you've got to say— (*Starts for R.U.*)

CAPPY. (*Yells*) It isn't all I've got to say, not by a long shot! (*MATT stops up R. and turns.*) I've got a whole barrellful to spill yet and it'll pay you to stay and listen to it, my high-cockerlorum!

MATT. (*Returns c.*) Well, hurry up with it!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) I won't hurry up—I'll take my own good time!

MATT. Come on, come on—out with it!

CAPPY. Well, it's about that little girl, Goldie Glake, whom you flimflammed into going into business with you!

MATT. (*Shoves that he's hit*) What about her?

CAPPY. That girl has been with me a long time, and I think a heap of her. Now you've handed her a dirty deal—you made her think that you cared for her and got her head over heels in love with you. Then you turned round, like the young pup you are, and dropped her cold!

MATT. (*White heat*) You'd better take care, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Don't get touchy with me—you're in the wrong and you know it! You threw that little girl over without a word of explanation and she's grieving her heart out!

MATT. I avoided her after I found out that she had been trifling with me—that she had led me to suppose she cared for me, while she was receiving the attentions of another man.

CAPPY. Oh, you found out—you found out! How did you find out?

MATT. The man told me himself—and I know he was telling the truth!

CAPPY. Matt, you haven't got much use for me, and in a business deal you'd trust me about as far as you would a Sambo with a watermelon. But you don't think I'd lie where a woman was concerned, do you?

MATT. (*Sincerely*) I don't, Mr. Ricks. Outside of business, I think you are as square as a die.

CAPPY. (*Drily*) Thanks! Then if I told you I knew it to be a fact that the girl you had in partnership with you never cared for any man but yourself, you'd believe me?

MATT. I'd have to.

CAPPY. Well, I *do* know it to be a fact!

MATT. (*Restraining his joy*) You really mean that, Mr. Ricks?

CAPPY. I certainly do!

MATT. (*Puzzled*) But I cannot understand why that fellow should lie to me!

CAPPY. He didn't lie to you. You were the victim of a mix-up, Matt, and it will all be straightened out the moment you see her. (*CAPPY goes close to MATT.*) The infernal little fool thinks a lot of you, Peasley. Can't understand how she can be in love with a big, overgrown dub like you, but she is. Do you care for her, Matt?

MATT. I do, Mr. Ricks. I think she's the finest

girl in the world. I've been mighty unhappy the last week.

CAPPY. Well, she's been snivelling around till she's got me about crazy. Just had to speak to you in self-defense.

MATT. (*Feelingly*) You've done—you've done us both a great kindness, Mr. Ricks. Where can I see her?

CAPPY. Oh, you'll find her fast enough! She'll be right on tap to trot right into your arms the moment I give the high-sign! (*Close to MATT.*) But remember, I'm responsible for that child, and you've got to be just a little bit more than on the level with her. If you pull any of your sailor tricks on her, by the great horned spoon, I'll exterminate your Red Diamond and send you to jail! And you know I can do it!

MATT. (*Flares up*) You don't have to threaten me to make me do what is right by the woman I love!

CAPPY. Oh, bunk and fiddlesticks! I don't trust you sailors as far as I can throw a cat by the tail! Bad bunch, the whole outfit of you! And you're no different from the rest—break a girl's heart and boast about it to your friends!

MATT. (*Angrily*) That'll do, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. Well, it's the truth! A husky, good-looking duffer like you can do what he wants with a silly girl. Wouldn't be a bit surprised if you had a wife and children waiting for you somewhere down in Maine this moment!

MATT. (*Tensely*) Mr. Ricks, you just did me a great kindness, and I'm thinking about it. But if you don't retract what you just said, I'm going to break you in two!

CAPPY. (*Shrilly*) Well, I won't retract it! You're a cheat! A fraud, a robber in business, and

I have no reason to think you would be anything else in love!

MATT. (*Starts for him*) Why—you——

CAPPY. (*Backing L.*) Don't you lay your hands on me, you big bully!

MATT. (*Moving towards him*) You know what I'm going to do to you?

CAPPY. (*Screams*) What?

MATT. (*Moves toward him*) I'm going to paddle you!

(CAPPY yells and bolts for door L. Opens it and calls off L.)

CAPPY. (*Screams off L.*) Skinner! Skinner! Bring your axe-handle, quick! (*Turns, faces MATT.*) Now, you ruffian, you'd better look out! Skinner's bringing out an axe-handle he's had in pickle for you for a long time!

(SKINNER rushes on with axe-helve in his hand. CAPPY points to MATT.)

CAPPY. (*Shrilly*) Skinner, that big, overgrown flapdoodle there says he's going to spank me! Now you just take that axe-handle and wallop him over the head. I'll back you up to the limit!

(SKINNER advances threateningly towards MATT, who steps back a little.)

CAPPY. (*Screams*) Wait a minute, Skinner, wait a minute! (*Crosses to L.*) Let me get out first! Don't want to see any bloodshed—don't want to witness any assault—might be dragged into court! (*At door.*) Don't kill him, Skinner—just smash him up a little! (*Exits, closing door.*)

MATT. (*Shaking finger at SKINNER*) Skinner—

if you lift that axe-handle, I'll take it away from you and break it over your head!

SKINNER. (*Looks at door L.J.—turns and grins at MATT*) Don't worry! I wouldn't take any chances with you, Captain Peasley! (*Places axe-handle against L. of desk. Crosses to MATT—offers hand.*) Will you shake hands?

MATT. (*Withholding hand*) What's the idea?

SKINNER. The idea is—I want to shake your hand.

MATT. Why?

SKINNER. Because I like and admire you, Captain Peasley. I have seen in you every quality I lack myself—physical courage, daring, initiative! I think you are a square, upright young man, and I see a big future in store for you. (*Extends his hand again.*) Won't you shake?

MATT. (*Impulsively*) Why, of course, Skinner. (*After they shake*) But I always thought you disliked me?

SKINNER. Oh, I had to pretend to—and I guess you know why. I've been with Mr. Ricks twenty-five years, and I've learned just what side my bread is buttered on. He'll do anything in the world for you if you agree with him—but if you oppose him he will try to make you very unhappy.

MATT. Yes, he delights in trying to make people unhappy. Know what he just sprung on me?

SKINNER. What?

MATT. Said the name of my partner, Goldie Glake, is spurious and therefore the corporation charter of the Red Diamond isn't valid.

SKINNER. Oh, that is what he had up his sleeve!

MATT. Said he was going to sue and put the Red Diamond out of business—and put me in jail.

SKINNER. Is he on firm ground?

MATT. Not a bit of it. We bought that charter from a company that incorporated under the name

of the Red Diamond but never went into business. It's as good as gold.

SKINNER. Did you tell him that?

MATT. (*Laughs*) No. I wanted to see how far the old villain would go. It was almost pitiful to see how he crowed and gloated over me. (MATT *looks at door L. grimly.*) But before I leave here he'll sing another tune!

SKINNER. Why not let him get away with it, Mr. Peasley?

MATT. (*Astonished*) What?

SKINNER. It won't do you any harm—and it will make him so happy. He won't try to take any action, I promise you that, and he'll never know the difference unless you tell him.

MATT. Let that old rascal think he has me sewed up? Why, he'd shout it all over the city!

SKINNER. What if he did?—you know where you stand, and can have your little laugh all to yourself.

MATT. (*Stubbornly*) No, Skinner, I wouldn't think of it.

SKINNER. (*Close to MATT*) I'm going to tell you something, Captain Peasley. I've been in there—(*Indicates L.*)—the last fifteen minutes talking with someone who holds your whole future in the palm of her hand, and I know that you are on the threshold of the greatest victory of your life. So you can afford to be generous to Mr. Ricks in a little thing like this. Let him gloat over his cheap victory over you—he's an old man and he'll enjoy it so. You've defeated him at every turn and he has just planned night and day to lay a trap for you. Now he's in there gloating till his old heart is dancing with joy. I don't suppose you have the least idea of it—but down in his heart he loves you, Captain Peasley—loves you as if you were his own son.

MATT. (*Astounded*) Say, what are you talking about, Skinner——

SKINNER. That's the truth, Peasley—he loves you—loves you because you've stood up to him and fought him face to face, because you've made good. I know he has a queer way of showing it—he's a queer old man with ideas of his own. But he's good, Captain—just gold all the way through, and some day you will come to love him as I do. Promise not to disillusion him about the Red Diamond—let him have his little plaything for awhile!

MATT. (*Softened*) Well, Skinner, if it will do him any good!

SKINNER. It will, and you'll never regret it. I've seen how things have been drifting with him for some time. And I've heard things in the re—— (*Indicates.*)—just now that makes me sure the time will come when you will sit in this office and boss me—when dear old Cappy Ricks is no more. The time will come when you will direct the destinies of the Blue Star and make it the biggest shipping concern of the Pacific.

MATT. Skinner, are you crazy!

SKINNER. That's what's going to happen as sure as you are standnig there. You have **proven** yourself a real business man, and as the son-in-law of Alden P. Ricks——

MATT. Son-in-law!

SKINNER. Yes, Captain Peasley, your business partner, whom you knew as Goldie Glake, is Mr. Ricks's daughter, Florence Ricks!

MATT. (*Looks at SKINNER—dazed*) Skinner—you—— (*Turns—light dawns on him.*) By ginger—what a ninny I've been! (*Half to himself*) Florence Ricks!

SKINNER. One of the finest, sweetest girls that ever lived, Captain Peasley! And if you had listened to what I did about you a few minutes ago,

you'd consider yourself the most fortunate man alive.

MATT. (*Half to himself*) Florence Ricks! And I declared only this morning that I wouldn't marry anyone Ricks had a claim on!

SKINNER. We all say things we can't live up to. And after all, it isn't Goldie Glake you care for—or Florence Ricks—it's just the girl!

MATT. You're right, Skinner—it's just the girl. You've done me a big favor, Skinner.

SKINNER. That's all right. And now I am going to ask you to do *me* a favor.

MATT. (*Cordially*) Anything you ask, Skinner!

SKINNER. If Mr. Ricks comes out here and finds that nothing has happened, he'll be so disappointed he'll probably fire me.

MATT. (*Laughs*) He sure would. What'll we do?

SKINNER. We'll have to pretend we've had a fearful scrap and I've got the best of it. It'll just tickle the old man to death—and it won't be a bad feather in my cap.

MATT. (*Laughs*) I understand. What do you want me to do?

SKINNER. (*Takes axe-handle*) You just lean up against the desk there and hold your head, and I'll do the rest!

MATT. All right! Here goes! (*Drops against desk—holds head in hands.*)

(SKINNER crosses down to door L.I. and raises axe-handle. Slams door fearful blow with handle.)

SKINNER. Take that, you infernal ruffian! I'll teach you to come in here and insult the man I work for! (*Slams door again.*) And there's another for luck!

(CAPPY dashes in door L.I.—stops on seeing MATT.)

MATT. (*Groans horribly*) Oh!

SKINNER. And now I'll finish you, you rowdy!
(*Starts in MATT'S direction with handle upraised.*)

CAPPY. (*Grabs him frantically—yells*) Skinner!
Skinner!

SKINNER. Let me finish him! Let me finish him!

CAPPY. (*Snatches handle from SKINNER*) Give me that axe-helve! (*Holding helve behind him.*) The idea of an old dried apple like you going on the warpath! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!

MATT. (*Shakes finger at SKINNER*) I'll have you arrested for assault with a deadly weapon, Mr. John Skinner!

CAPPY. (*Crosses to c.*) You're not going to have anybody arrested! Got all you can do to keep out of jail yourself!

MATT. You think I'm going to stand for a man hitting me over the head with an axe-handle——

CAPPY. Not another peep out of you, sir—not another peep! Now, are you willing to call it square between you and Skinner?

MATT. No, I'm not!

CAPPY. (*Goes up and takes up phone*) All right!

MATT. (*Pretends alarm*) What are you going to do?

CAPPY. Phone for a warrant for you on a charge of fraud!

MATT. (*Pretends to plead*) Oh, don't do that, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Puts phone down*) Oh, you admit that I can do it, eh?

MATT. I suppose you can—but——

CAPPY. (*Dances around with joy*) Look at him, Skinner—look at him! The big, blustering, conceited, swaggering cock-o'-the-walk! Nothing but a toy-balloon—stick a pin in him and he blows up! (*Goes to MATT—wags head in his face.*) Thought you had Alden P. Ricks licked to a frazzle, did you?

Well, I guess you've found out differently now! (*Turns back to SKINNER.*) Look at him, Skinner—just got him eating out of our hands, grovelling on all-fours, lapping up dirt by the quart!

SKINNER. I see him, Mr. Ricks.

CAPPY. (*Slaps SKINNER on shoulder*) Another scalp to our wigwam, Skinner—we brought him down together, you and I! (*Slaps SKINNER on shoulder again.*) Best general manager in the shipping game, Skinner! Your salary is twelve thousand dollars a year after this!

SKINNER. Oh, Mr. Ricks—

CAPPY. Not a peep out of you, sir—not a peep! Now you just go in there and tell the young lady it's her turn to take a fall out of this bumptious young upstart!

SKINNER. (*Crosses to L.I.*) Yes, sir!

(CAPPY turns toward MATT. SKINNER smiles broadly at MATT and exits L.I.)

CAPPY. (*Wags head at MATT*) Guess you'll pay attention to Alden P. Ricks now—you star-spangled jack-ass! You've found out what it means to get your fingers against a buzz-saw! And I guess you'll steer clear of my general manager in the future, too!

MATT. I certainly will!

CAPPY. (*Beaming with satisfaction*) You can just bet your life you will. And from now on you're just going to hop every time Alden Ricks snaps his fingers.

(FLORRY enters L.I and stands in doorway.)

FLORRY. You sent for me, sir?

CAPPY. (*Turns*) Yes, come in—my— (*Stops*

—clears throat.) Ahem-m! Harumph-h! Miss Glake, come right in!

(FLORRY advances to L.C., looking at MATT.)

CAPPY. (*Looking at watch*) Now I'll give this salt-water Lothario just one minute to propose to you. If he hasn't come through in that time, off he goes to jail!

FLORRY. (*Restrains laugh*) Oh, you wouldn't do that, Mr. Ricks!

CAPPY. (*Snaps*) Yes, I would—got my thumb on him—just where I want him! (*Crosses to L.I—turns at door.*) One minute, young man—not a second longer! (*Exits, slamming door.*)

(MATT and FLORRY stand looking at each other for a moment, after CAPPY'S exit.)

MATT. (*Comes to c. with arms outstretched*) Florence!

FLORRY. (*Pauses in surprise*) Why, who told you?

MATT. Skinner. He told me everything, dear—

FLORRY. And you want me just the same?

MATT. I'd want you no matter who you were!

FLORRY. (*Goes into his arms—happily*) Oh, Matt! I'm so happy!

MATT. (*About to kiss her*) Florence, kiss——

(CECIL sticks head in L.U.)

CECIL. Oh, I say——

(MATT and FLORRY separate.)

MATT. (*Disgusted*) Oh—what d'ye think of that!

CECIL. (*Excitedly to off L.*) Goldie—Goldie! Come here quick! (*Crosses around back of desk to R. ELLEN follows him on—joins them. CECIL indicates MATT and FLORRY.*) They were hugging each other—honestly they were!

ELLEN. (*Starts forward*) Florence—it isn't a—
a match?

FLORRY. (*Looks at MATT*) I'm hoping it is, dear!

ELLEN. (*Embraces her*) Oh, isn't that lovely!

CECIL. (*Offers hand to MATT*) Congratulations, old top—you've picked a winner. (*Confidentially*) And say—it's great when you get used to it! (*Turns, drags ELLEN from FLORENCE to R.*) I say, give us men a chance to do a little embracing. Women weren't intended to hug each other! (*Places his arm about ELLEN.*)

(CAPPY opens door L.I just a crack.)

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Minute's up!

FLORRY. (*In panic*) Oh, Matt, you haven't proposed to me yet!

MATT. (*Takes her in his arms—quickly*) Will you marry me?

FLORRY. Of course I will! (*Embraces him.*)

ELLEN. (*Clasps CECIL*) Oh, Cecil—we've heard the proposal!

(CAPPY enters L.I—stops, flabbergasted, on seeing two couples embracing.)

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Skinner! Skinner—get some pink and blue ribbon and tie it on the furniture! (*Crosses to L.C. SKINNER enters L.I, followed by LUCY. CAPPY glares at MATT.*) Young man, do you know who that girl is you are pawing around?

MATT. (*Smiles at FLORRY*) I think I do!

CAPPY. (*Yells*) Well, I think you don't! That's my daughter, young fellow!

MATT. (*Draws away from FLORRY—in pretended astonishment*) What!

CAPPY. (*Delighted*) Sort o' slams you between the eyes, doesn't it?

MATT. (*To FLORRY*) Are you Florence Ricks?

CAPPY. (*Imitating him*) Yes, she's Florence Ricks! What's the matter, don't you like the name of Ricks?

MATT. No, I don't!

CAPPY. Well, what are you going to do about it?

MATT. (*Folds FLORRY in his arms*) I'm going to change it!

QUICK CURTAIN

SETS: LIGHTS AND PROPS

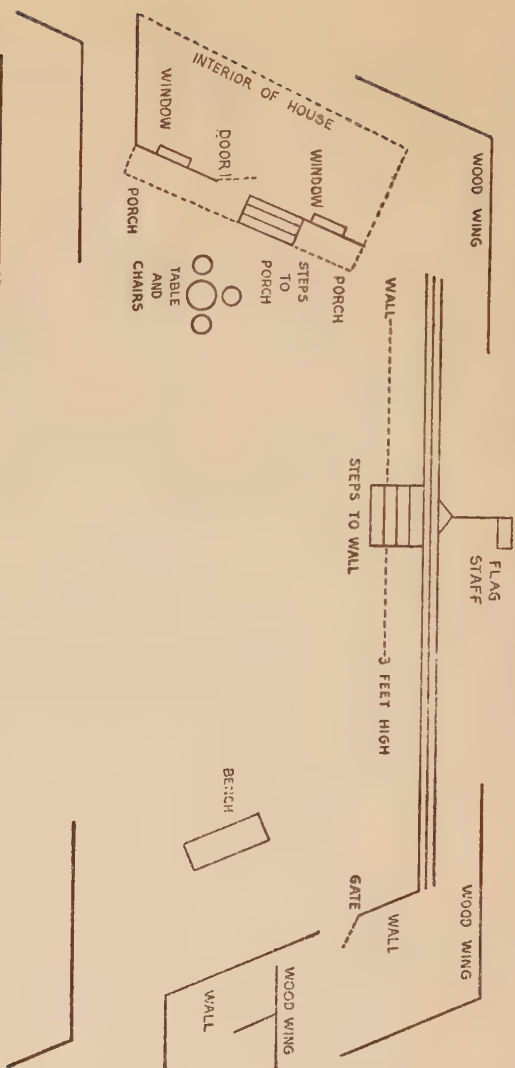
ACT ONE

SET: CAPPY RICKS's office, California Street, San Francisco. Office interior in four. Door R.U. opening to outer office and to street stairway. Wide office window c. in flat, hinged to open c. and swing inward. Across window is painted, in reverse lettering, "BLUE STAR NAVIGATION COMPANY." Under lettering is painted triangular white flag with blue star in center. Practical door L.U. leading to bookkeeper's office. Practical door L.I. opening to SKINNER's office. Interior backing for doors and second-story street backing for window.

PROPS: Flat-topped desk c. for CAPPY RICKS. Papers, books, ink-stands, and telephone on desk. Swivel-chair back of desk, and light office chairs R. and L. of it. Safe R. against wall, just below door R.U. Door of safe open at rise. Small stand up in R. corner of room above R.U. Water pitcher and glass on stand. Filing cabinet L. against wall, between doors on stand. Glass case on cabinet containing model of full-rigged ship. Other models and marine pictures about room. Bundle of unopened letters for ELLEN. Bouquet of roses for FLORRY. Stenographer's pad and pencil for ELLEN. Loose-leaf ledger sheets for FLORRY. Small bundle of vouchers for MATT.

LIGHTS: Full up throughout act. Afternoon. Floods for entrances. Sunlight through window c. in flat.

OCEAN HORIZON DROP SHOWING HEADLANDS OF GOLDEN GATE



GROUND PLAN OF ACT TWO "CAPPY RICKS"

TWEEDLES

Comedy in 3 acts, by Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson. 5 males, 4 females. 1 interior. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

Julian, scion of the blue-blooded Castleburys, falls in love with Winsora Tweedle, daughter of the oldest family in a Maine village. The Tweedles esteem the name because it has been rooted in the community for 200 years, and they look down on "summer people" with the vigor that only "summer boarder" communities know.

The Castleburys are aghast at the possibility of a match, and call on the Tweedles to urge how impossible such an alliance would be. Mr. Castlebury laboriously explains the barrier of social caste, and the elder Tweedle takes it that these unimportant summer folk are terrified at the social eminence of the Tweedles.

Tweedle generously agrees to co-operate with the Castleburys to prevent the match. But Winsora brings her father to realize that in reality the Castleburys look upon them as inferiors. The old man is infuriated, and threatens vengeance, but is checkmated when Julian unearths a number of family skeletons and argues that father isn't a Tweedle, since the blood has been so diluted that little remains. Also, Winsora takes the matter into her own hands and outfaces the old man. So the youngsters go forth triumphant. "Tweedles" is Booth Tarkington at his best. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

JUST SUPPOSE

A whimsical comedy in 3 acts, by A. E. Thomas, author of "Her Husband's Wife," "Come Out of the Kitchen," etc. 6 males, 2 females. 1 interior, 1 exterior. Costumes, modern. Plays 2¼ hours.

It was rumored that during his last visit the Prince of Wales appeared for a brief spell under an assumed name somewhere in Virginia. It is on this story that A. E. Thomas based "Just Suppose." The theme is handled in an original manner. Linda Lee Stafford meets one George Shipley (in reality is the Prince of Wales). It is a case of love at first sight, but, alas, princes cannot select their mates and thereby hangs a tale which Mr. Thomas has woven with infinite charm. The atmosphere of the South with its chivalry dominates the story, touching in its sentiment and lightened here and there with delightful comedy. "Just Suppose" scored a big hit at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, with Patricia Collinge. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.)

Price, 75 Cents.

SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th Street, New York City

Our new descriptive catalogue sent free on request.

COME OUT OF THE KITCHEN

A charming comedy in 3 acts. Adapted by A. E. Thomas from the story of the same name by Alice Duer Miller. 6 males, 5 females. 3 interior scenes. Costumes, modern. Plays 2½ hours.

The story of "Come Out of the Kitchen" is written around a Virginia family of the old aristocracy, by the name of Daingerfield, who, finding themselves temporarily embarrassed, decide to rent their magnificent home to a rich Yankee. One of the conditions of the lease by the well-to-do New Englander stipulates that a competent staff of white servants should be engaged for his sojourn at the stately home. This servant question presents practically insurmountable difficulties, and one of the daughters of the family conceives the mad-cap idea that she, her sister and their two brothers shall act as the domestic staff for the wealthy Yankee. Olivia Daingerfield, who is the ringleader in the merry scheme, adopts the cognomen of Jane Allen, and elects to preside over the destinies of the kitchen. Her sister, Elizabeth, is appointed housemaid. Her elder brother, Paul, is the butler, and Charley, the youngest of the group, is appointed to the position of bootboy. When Burton Crane arrives from the North, accompanied by Mrs. Faulkner, her daughter, and Crane's attorney, Tucker, they find the staff of servants to possess so many methods of behavior out of the ordinary that amusing complications begin to arise immediately. Olivia's charm and beauty impress Crane above everything else, and the merry story continues through a maze of delightful incidents until the real identity of the heroine is finally disclosed. But not until Crane has professed his love for his charming cook, and the play ends with the brightest prospects of happiness for these two young people. "Come Out of the Kitchen," with Ruth Chatterton in the leading rôle, made a notable success on its production by Henry Miller at the Cohan Theatre, New York. It was also a great success at the Strand Theatre, London. A most ingenious and entertaining comedy, and we strongly recommend it for amateur production. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

GOING SOME

Play in 4 acts. By Paul Armstrong and Rex Beach. 12 males, 4 females. 2 exteriors, 1 interior. Costumes, modern and cowboy. Plays a full evening.

Described by the authors as the "chronicle of a certain lot of college men and girls, with a tragic strain of phonograph and cowboys." A rollicking good story, full of action, atmosphere, comedy and drama, redolent of the adventurous spirit of youth. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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MRS. PARTRIDGE PRESENTS

Comedy in 3 acts. By Mary Kennedy and Ruth Hawthorne. 6 males, 6 females. Modern costumes. 2 interiors. Plays $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

The characters, scenes and situations are thoroughly up-to-date in this altogether delightful American comedy. The heroine is a woman of tremendous energy, who manages a business—as she manages everything—with great success, and at home presides over the destinies of a growing son and daughter. Her struggle to give the children the opportunities she herself had missed, and the children's ultimate revolt against her well-meant management—that is the basis of the plot. The son who is cast for the part of artist and the daughter who is to go on the stage offer numerous opportunities for the development of the comic possibilities in the theme.

The play is one of the most delightful, yet thought-provoking American comedies of recent years, and is warmly recommended to all amateur groups. (Royalty on application.) Price, 75 Cents.

IN THE NEXT ROOM

Melodrama in 3 acts. By Eleanor Robson and Harriet Ford. 8 males, 3 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays $2\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

"Philip Vantine has bought a rare copy of an original Boulton cabinet and ordered it shipped to his New York home from Paris. When it arrives it is found to be the original itself, the possession of which is desired by many strange people. Before the mystery concerned with the cabinet's shipment can be cleared up, two persons meet mysterious death fooling with it and the happiness of many otherwise happy actors is threatened" (Burns Mantle). A first-rate mystery play, comprising all the elements of suspense, curiosity, comedy and drama. "In the Next Room" is quite easy to stage. It can be unreservedly recommended to high schools and colleges. (Royalty, twenty-five dollars.) Price, 75 Cents.

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